

FRONTISPIECE.



Johnson del.

Night grants thee the full freedom of the Skies.

Night Thoughts. ps. 238.

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NIGHT THOUGHTS,
ON
LIFE, DEATH, and IMMORTALITY,
A POEM.

TO WHICH IS ADDED
A PARAPHRASE on Part of the Book of JOB,
and the LAST DAY,

By *EDWARD YOUNG*, L.L.D.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Say, pensive Muse, whose dismal Scenes delight,
Frequent at Tombs, and in the Realms of Night;
This Truth how certain—when this Life is o'er,
Man dies to live—and lives—to die no more.

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M E M O I R S

OF THE LATE

Dr. EDWARD YOUNG.

*Collected from various Authors, as well as private
Friends.*

EDWARD YOUNG, L.L.D. Author of the Night Thoughts, and many other excellent pieces, was the only son of Dr. Edward Young, an eminent, learned, and judicious divine; Dean of Sarum, Fellow of Winchester College, and Rector of Upham, in Hampshire. He was born in the year 1684, at Upham, and after being educated in Winchester College, was chosen on the foundation of New College at Oxford, October 13, 1703, when he was nineteen years of age; but being disqualified on account of his youth, and there being no vacancy of a fellowship, he removed before the expiration of the year to Corpus Christi, where he entered himself a Gentleman Commoner.

In 1708, he was put into a law fellowship, at All Souls, by Archbishop Tennison. Here he took the degree of B. C. L. in 1714; and in 1719 D. C. L. In this year he published his Tragedy of Buziris; in 1721, the Revenge; and in 1723, the Brothers. About this time he published his elegant Poem on the Last Day, which, being wrote by a Layman, gave the more satisfaction. He soon after published the Force of Religion, or Vanquish'd Love, a poem, which also gave much pleasure to most who read it; but more especially to the noble family, for whose entertainment it was principally written. Some charge the Author with a stiffness of versification in both these poems; but they met with such success as to procure him the particular friendship of several of the nobility, and among the rest, the patronage of the Duke of Wharton; which greatly helped him in his finances. By his Grace's recommendation he put up for member of parliament for Cirencester*; but did not succeed. His noble Patron honoured him with his company to All Souls, and, through his instance and persuasion, was at the expence of erecting a considerable part of the new buildings then carrying on in that college. The turn of his mind leading him to divinity, he quitted the law, which he had never practised; and taking orders, was appointed chaplain in ordinary to King George II. April, 1728.

In that year he published a Vindication of Providence, in quarto; and soon after, his Estimate of Human Life, in the same size, which have gone through several editions in 12mo.
and

* He was naturally of an ambitious temper and disposition.

and thought by many to be the best of his prose performances. In 1730, he was presented by his college to the rectory of Welwyn, in Hertfordshire, reputed worth 300l. a year, besides the lordship of the manor annexed to it. He was married in 1731, to Lady Betty Lee, widow of Colonel Lee, and daughter to the Earl of Litchfield, (a lady of an eminent genius, and great poetical talents) who brought him a son and heir not long after their marriage.

Though always in high esteem with many of the first rank, he never rose to great preferment. He was a favourite of the late Prince of Wales, his present Majesty's father, and for some years before his death was a pretty constant attendant at court; but upon the Prince's decease, all his hopes of farther rising in the church were at an end, and towards the latter part of his life, his very desire of it seemed to be laid aside; for in his Night Thoughts he observes, that there was one (meaning himself) in Britain born, with courtiers bred, who thought even wealth might come a day too late; however, upon the death of Dr. Hales, in 1761, he was made Clerk of the Closet to the Princess Dowager of Wales.

About the year 1741, he had the unhappiness to lose his wife, and both her children, which she had by her first husband, a son and daughter, very promising characters. They all died within a short time of each other. That he felt greatly for their loss, as well as for that of his Lady, may easily be perceived by his fine Poem of the Night Thoughts, occasioned by it. This was a species of poetry peculiarly his

own, and has been unrivalled by all who have attempted to copy him. His applause here was deservedly great. The unhappy bard, whose griefs in melting numbers flow, and melancholy joys diffuse around," has been often sung by the profane as well as pious. They were written, as before observed, under the recent pressure of his sorrow for the loss of his wife, and his daughter and son-in-law. They are addressed to Lorenzo, a man of pleasure and the world, and who, it is generally supposed (and very probably) was his own son, then labouring under his father's displeasure. His son-in-law is said to be characterized by Philander, and his daughter was certainly the person he speaks of under the appellation of Narcissa. See Night 3, l. 62. In her last illness †, he accompanied her to Montpellier, in the South of France, where she died, soon after her arrival in the city.

After her death, it seems she was denied Christian burial ‡, on account of being reckoned a Heretic, by the inhabitants of the place, which inhumanity is justly resented in the same beautiful Poem. See Night 3, l. 165, in which his wife also
is

† She died of a consumption, occasioned by her grief for the death of her mother.

‡ The priests refusing the Doctor leave to bury his daughter in one of their church-yards, he was obliged, with the assistance of his servant, to dig a grave in a field near Montpellier; where they deposited the body, without the help of any of the inhabitants; who consider Protestants in the same light as they do brutes.

is frequently mentioned; and he thus laments the loss of all three, in an apostrophe to death :

- ‘ Infatiate archer ! could not one suffice ?
 ‘ Thy shaft slew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain ;
 ‘ And thrice, ere thrice yon moon had fill’d her horn.’

He wrote his *Conjectures on Original Composition* when he was turned of eighty. If it has blemishes mixed with its beauties, it is not to be wondered at, when we consider his great age, and the many infirmities which generally attend such an advanced period of life. However, the many excellent remarks this Work abounds with, make it justly esteemed as a brightening before death. The *Resignation*, a Poem, the last and the least esteemed of all Dr. Young’s Works, was published a short time before his death, and only served to manifest, the taper of genius (which had so long shone with peculiar brightness in him) was now glimmering in the socket. He died in his parsonage-house, at Welwyn, April 12th, 1765, and was buried, according to his own desire (attended by all the poor of the parish) under the altar-piece of that church, by the side of his wife *. This altar-piece is reckoned one of the most curious in the kingdom, being adorned with an elegant piece of needle-work, by the Lady Betty Young †.

Before

* The bell did not toll at his funeral, nor was any person allowed to be in mourning.

† In the middle of it are inscribed these words : *I am the bread of life*. On the north side of the chancel is this inscription, as supposed by the Doctor’s order ; *VIRGINIBUS—Increase in wisdom and understanding* ; and opposite, on the south side, *PURISQUE—and in favour with God and man*.

See App. to Biog. Brit.

Before the Doctor died, he ordered all his manuscripts to be burnt : Those that knew how much he expressed in a small compass, and that he never wrote on trivial subjects, will lament both the excess of his modesty (if I may so term it) and the irreparable loss to posterity ; especially when it is considered, that he was the intimate acquaintance of Addison, and was himself one of the writers of the Spectators.

In his life-time he published two or three Sermons, one of which was preached before the House of Commons.—He left an only son and heir, Mr. Frederick Young, who had the first part of his education at Winchester school, and becoming a scholar upon the foundation, was sent, in consequence thereof, to New College in Oxford ; but there being no vacancy (though the society waited for one no less than two years) he was admitted in the mean time in Baliol College, where he behaved so imprudently as to be forbidden the college. This misconduct disoblged his father so much, that he never would suffer him to come into his sight afterwards : However, by his will, he bequeathed to him, after a few legacies, his whole fortune, which was considerable.

As a Christian and Divine, he might be said to be an example of primeval piety : He gave a remarkable instance of this one Sunday, when preaching in his turn at St. James's ; for though he strove to gain the attention of his audience, when he found he could not prevail, his pity for their folly got the better of all decorum, he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into a flood of tears.

The

The turn of his mind was naturally solemn; and he usually, when at home in the country, spent many hours in a day walking among the tombs in his own church-yard. His conversation, as well as writings, had all a reference to a future life; and this turn of mind mixed itself even with his improvements in gardening: He had, for instance, an alcove with a bench, so well painted in it, that at a distance it seemed to be real; but upon a nearer approach, the deception was perceived, and this motto appeared:

INVISIBILIA NON DECIPIUNT.

The things unseen do not deceive us.

Yet, notwithstanding this gloominess of temper, he was fond of innocent sports and amusements. He instituted an assembly and a bowling-green in his parish, and often promoted the mirth of the company in person. His wit was ever poignant*, and always levelled at those who shewed any contempt for decency and religion. His Epigram spoken extempore upon Voltaire is well known. Voltaire happening to ridicule Milton's allegorical personages of Death and Sin, Dr. Young thus addressed him:—

Thou art so witty, profligate, and thin,
Thou seem'st a Milton with his Death and Sin.

As

* In his last illness, a friend of the Doctor's calling to know how he did, and mentioning the death of a person who had been in a decline a long time, said he was quite worn to a shell by the time he died. "Very likely," replied the Doctor; "but what has become of the kernel?"

As to his character as a poet, his composition was instinct in his youth, with as much vanity as was necessary to excel in that art. He published a Collection of such of his Works as he thought the best, in 1761, in four volumes duodecimo, and another was published since. Among these, his Satires, intitled, the Love of Fame, or the Universal Passion, are by most considered as his principal performance. They are finely characteristic of that excessive pride, or rather folly, of following prevailing fashions, and aiming to be more than we really are, or can possibly be. They were written in early life; and if smoothness of style, brilliancy of wit, and simplicity of subject, can assure applause, our Author may demand it on this occasion.

After the death of his wife, as he had never given any attention to domestic affairs, so knowing his unfitness for it, he referred the whole care and management of his family to his housekeeper, to whom he left a handsome legacy.

It is observed by Dean Swift, that if Dr. Young, in his Satires, had been more merry or severe, they would have been more generally pleasing, because mankind are more apt to be pleased with ill-nature and mirth than with solid sense and instruction. It is also observed of his Night Thoughts, that though they are chiefly flights of thinking almost superhuman, such as the description of Death, from his secret stand, noting down the follies of a Bacchanalian Society; the Epitaph upon the Departed World, and the Issuing of Satan from his Dungeon; yet these, and a great number of other remarkable fine thoughts, are sometimes overcast with an air
of

of gloominess and melancholy *, which have a disagreeable tendency, and must be unpleasing to a cheerful mind : However, it must be acknowledged by all, that they evidence a singular genius, a lively fancy, an extensive knowledge of men and things, especially of the feelings of the human heart, and paint, in the strongest colours, the vanity of life, with all its fading honours and emoluments, the benefits of true piety, especially in the views of death, and the most unanswerable arguments in support of the soul's immortality, and a future state.

* The Night Thoughts undoubtedly have their defects, as well as beauties ; but 'tis generally allowed, the latter are far more numerous, and so remarkably striking and conspicuous to the discerning reader, as in his view to eclipse the failings which otherwise might be discovered therein.

Dr. YOUNG was convinced of the impropriety of writing the Night Thoughts in a style so much above the understanding of common readers ; and said to a friend, a week or two before he died, that, was he to publish such another Treatise (respecting subjects) it should be in less elevated language, and more suited to the capacities of all.

G. W.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Paraphrase on Part of the Book of Job, and the Poem on the Last Day, being added to the Night Thoughts, will evince its Superiority over every other that has been published in this Size. The Reader may also safely rely on its being correct; and the Life of the Author (who was an Ornament to Human Nature as well as his Country) considerably more enlarged and accurate, the greatest Pains having been taken to collect it from his most intimate Friends, as well as different Authors.

THE
COMPLAINT.

ON LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY.

Humbly inscribed to the Right Hon.

ARTHUR ONSLOW, Esq.

Speaker of the House of Commons.

NIGHT THE FIRST.

TIR'D Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
He, like the world his ready visit pays
Where fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unfully'd with a tear. 5
From short (as usual) and disturb'd repose,
I 'wake: how happy they who 'wake no more!
Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.
I 'wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd desponding thought 10
From wave to wave of fancy'd misery
At random drove, her helm of reason lost.
Tho' now restor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
(A bitter change!) severer for severe:
The day too short for my distresses; and Night, 15
Ev'n in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine to the colour of my fate.

B

Night.

Night, fable goddess ! from her ebon throne,
 In rayless majesty, now stretches forth
 Her leaden sceptre o'er a slumb'ring world.
 Silence, how dead ! and darkness, how profound !
 Nor eye, nor list'ning ear, an object finds :
 Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse
 Of life stood still, and Nature made a pause ;
 An awful pause ! prophetic of her end.
 And let her prophecy be soon fulfill'd :
 Fate ! drop the curtain ; I can lose no more.

20

25

Silence, and Darkness ! solemn sisters ! twins
 From ancient Night, who nurse the tender thought
 To reason, and on reason build resolve,
 (That column of true majesty in man)
 Assist me : I will thank you in the grave ;
 The grave, your kingdom : there this frame shall fall
 A victim sacred to your dreary shrine.

30

But what are ye ? —

35

THOU, who didst put to flight
 Primæval silence, when the morning stars,
 Exulting, shouted o'er the rising bail ;
 O THOU ! whose word from solid darkness struck
 That spark, the sun ; strike wisdom from my soul ;
 My soul which flies to thee, her trust, her treasure,
 As misers to their gold, while others rest.

40

Thro' this opaque of nature, and of soul,
 This double night, transmit one pitying ray,
 To lighten and to cheer. O lead my mind,
 (A mind that fain would wander from its woe)
 Lead it thro' various scenes of life and death ;
 And from each scene the noblest truths inspire.
 Nor less inspire my conduct, than my song :
 Teach my best reason, reason ; my best will,
 Teach rectitude ; and fix my firm resolve
 Wisdom to wed, and pay her long arrear.
 Nor let the vial of thy vengeance, pour'd
 On this devoted head, be pour'd in vain.

45

50

The bell strikes One. We take no note of time,
 But from its loss. To give it then a tongue,
 Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,

55

NIGHT THE FIRST.

3

I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours.
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood. 60

It is the signal that demands dispatch;
How much is to be done? My hopes and fears
Start up alarm'd, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? a fathomless abyfs;
A dread eternity! how surely mine! 65
And can eternity belong to me,
Poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour?

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder He, who made him such! 70
Who center'd in our make such strange extremes!
From different natures marvelously mixt,
Connexion exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity! 75

A beam ethereal, fully'd, and absorpt!
Tho' fully'd, and dishonour'd, still divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory! a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! infect infinite! 80

A worm!—a god!—I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost! at home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surpris'd, aghast,
And wond'ring at her own! how reason reels!
O what a miracle to man is man, 85
Triumphantly distress'd! what joy, what dread!
Alternately transported, and alarm'd!

What can preserve my life? or what destroy?
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave:
Legions of angels can't confine me there. 90

'Tis past conjecture; all things rise in proof:
While o'er my limbs sleep's soft dominion spread,
What, tho' my soul fantastic measures trod
O'er fairy fields; or mourn'd along the gloom
Of pathless woods; or, down the craggy steep 95
Hurl'd headlong, swam with pain the mantled pool;
Or scal'd the cliff; or danc'd on hollow winds,

With antic shapes, wild natives of the brain ?
 Her ceaseless flight, tho' devious, speaks her nature
 Of subtler essence than the trodden clod : 100
 Active, ærial, tow'ring, unconfind,
 Unfetter'd with her gross companion's fall.
 Ev'n silent Night proclaims my soul immortal :
 Ev'n silent Night proclaims eternal day :
 For human weal Heav'n husbands all events : 105
 Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.
 Why then their loss deplore that are not lost ?
 Why wanders wretched thought their tombs around,
 In infidel distress ? Are angels there ?
 Slumbers, rak'd up in dust, ethereal fire ? 110
 They live ! they greatly live a life on earth
 Unkindled, unconceiv'd ; and from an eye
 Of tenderness, let heav'nly pity fall
 On me, more justly number'd with the dead.
 This is the desert, this the solitude : 115
 How populous, how vital, is the grave !
 This is creation's melancholy vault,
 The vale funereal, the sad cypress gloom ;
 The land of apparitions, empty shades !
 All, all, on earth is shadow ; all beyond, 120
 Is substance : the reverse is folly's creed :
 How solid all, where change shall be no more !
 This is the bud of being, the dim dawn,
 The twilight of our day, the vestibule :
 Life's theatre as yet is shut ; and death, 125
 Strong death alone can heave the massy bar,
 This gross impediment of clay remove,
 And make us embryos of existence free.
 From real life, but little more remote
 Is He, not yet a candidate for life, 130
 The future embryo, slumb'ring in his fire.
 Embryos we must be, till we burst the shell,
 Yon ambient, azure shell, and spring to life ;
 The life of gods, O transport ! and of man.
 Yet man, fool man ! here buries all his thoughts ; 135
 Inters celestial hopes without one sigh :
 Pris'ner of earth, and pent beneath the moon,

Here

Here pinions all his wishes ; wing'd by Heav'n
 To fly at infinite ; and reach it there,
 Where Seraphs gather immortality, 140
 On life's fair tree, fast by the throne of GOD :
 What golden joys ambrosial clust'ring glow
 In his full beam, and ripen for the just,
 Where momentary ages are no more ;
 Where Time, and Pain, and Chance, and Death, expire ! 145
 And is it in the flight of threescore years,
 To push eternity from human thought,
 And smother souls immortal in the dust ?
 A soul immortal spending all her fires,
 Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness, 150
 Thrown into tumult, raptur'd, or alarm'd,
 At aught this scene can threaten, or indulge,
 Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,
 To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.

Where falls this censure ? It o'erwhelms myself. 155
 How was my heart encrusted by the world !
 O how self-fetter'd was my grov'ling soul !
 How, like a worm, was I wrapt round and round
 In silken thought, which reptile Fancy spun,
 Till darken'd Reason lay quite clouded o'er 160
 With soft conceit of endless comfort here,
 Nor yet put forth her wings to reach the skies !
 Night-visions may befriend (as sung above :)
 Our waking dreams are fatal. How I dreamt
 Of things impossible ! (could sleep do more ?) 165
 Of joys perpetual in perpetual change !
 Of itable pleasures on the tossing wave !
 Eternal sunshine in the storms of life !
 How richly were my noon-tide trances hung
 With gorgeous tapestries of pictured joys ! 170
 Joy behind joy, in endless perspective !
 Till at Death's toll, whose restless iron tongue
 Calls daily for his millions at a meal,
 Starting I woke, and found myself undone.
 Where's now my frenzy's pompous furniture ? 175
 The cobweb'd cottage with its ragged wall
 Of mould'ring mud, is royalty to me !

The spider's most attenuated thread
Is cord, is cable, to man's tender tie
On earthly bliss; it breaks at every breeze. 180

O ye blest scenes of permanent delight!
Full, above measure! lasting, beyond bound!
A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss.
Could you, so rich in rapture, fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all your joy, 185
And quite unparadise the realms of light.
Safe are you lodg'd above these rolling spheres,
The baleful influence of whose giddy dance
Sheds sad vicissitude on all beneath.

Here teems with revolutions ev'ry hour;
And rarely for the better; or the best,
More mortal than the common births of fate,
Each Moment has its sickle, emulous
Of Time's enormous scythe, whose ample sweep
Strikes empires from the roof; each Moment plays 195
His little weapon in the narrow sphere
Of sweet domestic comfort, and cuts down
The fairest bloom of sublunary bliss.

Bliss! sublunary bliss!—proud words, and vain!
Implicit treason to divine decree! 200

A bold invasion of the rights of Heaven!
I clasp'd the phantoms, and I found them air.
O had I weigh'd it ere my fond embrace,
What darts of agony had miss'd my heart!

Death! great proprietor of all! 'tis thine 205
To tread out empire, and to quench the stars.

The sun himself by thy permission shines,
And, one day, thou shalt pluck him from his sphere.
Amid such mighty plunder, why exhaust
Thy partial quiver on a mark so mean? 210

Why thy peculiar rancour wreck'd on me?
Infatiate archer! could not one suffice?

Thy shaft flew thrice; and thrice my peace was slain;
And thrice, e'er thrice yon moon had fill'd her horn.

O Cynthia! why so pale? Dost thou lament 215
Thy wretched neighbour? Grieve to see thy wheel
Of ceaseless change outwhirl'd in human life?

How

NIGHT THE FIRST.

7

How wanes my borrow'd bliss ! From Fortune's smile,
Precarious courtesy ! not virtue's fire,
Self-given, solar, ray of sound delight.

220

In ev'ry vary'd posture, place, and hour,
How widow'd every thought of every joy !
Thought, busy thought ! too busy for my peace !
Thro' the dark postern of Time long elaps'd,
Led softly, by the stillness of the night,
Led, like a murderer (and such it proves !)
Strays (wretched rover !) o'er the pleasing past ;
In quest of wretchedness perversely strays ;
And finds all desert now ; and meets the ghosts
Of my departed joys, a numerous train !

225

230

I rue the riches of my former fate ;
Sweet comfort's blasted clusters I lament ;
I tremble at the blessings once so dear ;
And every pleasure pains me to the heart.

Yet why complain ? or why complain for one ?
Hangs out the sun his lustre but for me,
The single man ? are angels all beside ?
I mourn for millions : 'tis the common lot ;
In this shape, or in that, has Fate entail'd
The mother's throes on all of woman born,
Not more the children, than sure heirs of pain.

235

240

War, famine, pest, vulcano, storm, and fire,
Intestine broils, Oppression with her heart
Wrapt up in triple brass, besiege mankind :
God's Image disinherited of day,
Here plung'd in mines, forgets a sun was made ;
There beings, deathless as their haughty lord,
Are hammer'd to the galling oar for life ;
And plow the winter's wave, and reap despair :
Some, for hard masters, broken under arms,
In battle lopt away, with half their limbs,
Beg bitter bread thro' realms their valour sav'd,
If so the tyrant, or his minions, doom :
Want, and incurable Disease (fell pair !)
On hopeless multitudes remorseless seize
At once, and make a refuge of the grave :
How groaning hospitals eject their dead !

245

250

255

What numbers groan for sad admission there !
 What numbers, once in Fortune's lap high-fed,
 Solicit the cold hand of charity ! 260
 To shock us more, solicit it in vain !
 Ye silken sons of pleasure ! since in pains
 You rue more modish visits, visit here,
 And breathe from your debauch : give, and reduce
 Surfeits dominion o'er you : but so great 265
 Your impudence, you blush at what is right !
 Happy ! did sorrow seize on such alone.
 Nor prudence can defend, nor virtue save ;
 Disease invades the chastest temperance,
 And punishment the guiltless, and alarm 270
 Thro' thickest shades pursues the fond of peace.
 Man's caution often into danger turns,
 And his guard falling, crushes him to death.
 Not happiness itself makes good her name ;
 Our very wishes give us not our wish. 275
 How distant oft the thing we doat on most,
 From that for which we doat, felicity !
 The smoothest course of nature has its pains ;
 And truest friends, thro' error, wound our rest :
 Without misfortune, what calamities ! 280
 And what hostilities, without a foe !
 Nor are foes wanting to the best on earth !
 But endless is the list of human ills,
 And sighs might sooner fail, than cause to sigh.
 A part how small of the terraqueous globe 285
 Is tenanted by man ! the rest a waste,
 Rocks, deserts, frozen seas, and burning sands ;
 Wild haunts of monsters, poisons, stings, and death.
 Such is earth's melancholy map ! But, far
 More sad ! this earth is a true map of man : 290
 So bounded are its haughty lord's delights
 To Wo's wide empire ! where deep troubles toss,
 Loud sorrows howl, envenom'd passions bite,
 Rav'nous calamities our vitals seize,
 And threat'ning Fate wide opens to devour. 295
 What then am I, who sorrow for myself ?
 In age, in infancy, from others aid

Is all our hope ; to teach us to be kind.
 That, nature's first, last lesson to mankind :
 The selfish heart deserves the pain it feels ; 300
 More generous sorrow, while it sinks, exalts,
 And conscious virtue mitigates the pang.
 Nor virtue, more than prudence, bids me give
 Sworn thought a second channel ; who divide,
 They weaken too, the torrent of their grief. 305
 Take then, O world ! thy much-indebted tear :
 How sad a sight is human happiness
 To those whose thought can pierce beyond an hour !
 O thou ! whate'er thou art, whose heart exults !
 Would'st thou I should congratulate thy fate ? 310
 I know thou would'st ; thy pride demands it from me.
 Let thy pride pardon, what thy nature needs,
 The salutary censure of a friend.
 Thou happy wretch ! by blindness thou art blest'd,
 By dotage dandled to perpetual smiles. 315
 Know, similer ! at thy peril art thou pleas'd ;
 Thy pleasure is the promise of thy pain.
 Misfortune, like a creditor severe,
 But rises in demand for her delay ;
 She makes a scourge of past prosperity, 320
 To sting thee more, and double thy distress.
 Lorenzo, fortune makes her court to thee ;
 Thy fond heart dances, while the Syren sings.
 Dear is thy welfare ; think me not unkind ;
 I would not damp, but to secure, thy joys. 325
 Think not that fear is sacred to the storm :
 Stand on thy guard against the smiles of fate.
 Is Heav'n tremendous in its frowns ? Most sure ;
 And in its favours formidable too :
 Its favours here are trials, not rewards ; 330
 A call to duty, not discharge from care ;
 And should alarm us full as much as woes ;
 Awake us to their cause, and consequence ;
 And make us tremble, weigh'd with our desert ;
 Awe nature's tumult, and chastise her joys, 335
 Lest while we clasp, we kill them ; nay invert,
 To worse than simple misery, their charms.

Revolted joys, like foes in civil war,
 Like bosom friendships to resentment sour'd,
 With rage envenom'd rise against our peace. 340
 Beware what earth calls happiness ; beware
 All joys, but joys that never can expire ;
 Who builds on less than an immortal base,
 Fond as he seems, condemns his joys to death.
 Mine dy'd with thee, Philander ! thy last sigh 345
 Dissolv'd the charm ! the disenchanting earth
 Lost all her lustre. Where her glitt'ring tow'rs ?
 Her golden mountains, where ? All darken'd down
 To naked waste ; a dreary vale of tears :
 The great magician's dead ! Thou poor, pale piece 350
 Of out-cast earth, in darkness ! what a change
 From yesterday ! Thy darling hope so near,
 (Long-labour'd prize !) O how ambition flush'd
 Thy glowing cheek ! ambition truly great,
 Of virtuous praise. Death's subtle seed within, 355
 (Sly, treacherous miner !) working in the dark,
 Smil'd at thy well-concerted scheme, and beckon'd
 The worm to riot on that rose so red,
 Unfaded e'er it fell ; one moment's prey !
 Man's foresight is conditionally wise ; 360
 Lorenzo ! wisdom into folly turns,
 Oft the first instant, its idea fair
 To lab'ring thought is born : How dim our eye !
 The present moment terminates our sight ;
 Clouds, thick as those on doomsday, drown the next ; 365
 We penetrate, we prophesy in vain.
 Time is dealt out by particles ; and each,
 E'er mingled with the streaming sands of life,
 By fate's inviolable oath is sworn
 Deep silence, " Where eternity begins." 370
 By Nature's law, what may be, may be now ;
 There's no prerogative in human hours.
 In human hearts what bolder thought can rise,
 Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn ?
 Where is to-morrow ? In another world. 375
 For numbers this is certain ; the reverse
 Is sure to none : and yet on this perhaps,
 This peradventure, infamous for lies,

NIGHT THE FIRST.

11

As on a rock of adamant, we build
Our mountain hopes ; spin our eternal schemes, 380
As we the fatal sisters would outspin,
And, big with life's futurities, expire.

Not ev'n Philander had bespoke his shroud :
Nor had he cause ; a warning was deny'd.
How many fall as sudden, not as safe ! 385
As sudden, tho' for years admonish'd home !
Of human ills, the last extreme, beware,
Beware, Lorenzo ! a slow sudden death.

How dreadful that deliberate surprise !
Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer ; 390
Next day the fatal precedent will plead ;
Thus on, till wisdom is push'd out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time ;
Year after year it steals, till all are fled ;
And to the mercies of a moment leaves 395
The vast concerns of an eternal scene.

If not so frequent, would not this be strange ?
That 'tis so frequent, this is stranger still.

Of man's miraculous mistakes, this bears
The palm, " That all men are about to live," 400
For ever on the brink of being born.

All pay themselves the compliment, to think
They, one day, shall not drivel : and their pride
On this reversion takes up ready praise ;
At least, their own ; their future selves applauds : 405
How excellent that life they ne'er will lead !

Time lodg'd in their own hands is Folly's vails ;
That lodg'd in Fate's, to Wisdom they consign ;
The thing they can't but purpose, they postpone :
'Tis not in folly, not to scorn a fool ; 410
And scarce in human wisdom to do more.

All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage. When young, indeed,
In full content we sometimes nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves ; and only wish, 415
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty, man suspects himself a fool ;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan ;
At fifty, chides his infamous delay,

Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve ; 420
 In all the magnanimity of thought
 Resolves, and re-resolves ; then dies the same.

And why ? Because he thinks himself immortal.
 All men think all men mortal but themselves ;
 Themselves, when some alarming shock of fate 425
 Strikes thro' their wounded hearts the sudden dread ;
 But their hearts wounded, like the wounded air,
 Soon 'c ose ; where past the shaft no trace is found :
 As from the wing no scar the sky retains ;

The parted wave no furrow from the keel ; 430
 So dies in human hearts the thought of death :
 Even with the tender tear which nature sheds
 O'er those we love, we drop it in their grave.
 Can I forget Philander ? That were strange !
 O my full heart——But should I give it vent, 435
 The longest night, tho' longer far, would fail,
 And the lark listen to my midnight song.

The sprightly lark's shrill matin wakes the morn :
 Grief's sharpest thorn hard-pressing on my breast,
 I strive, with wakeful melody, to chear 440
 The sullen gloom, sweet Philomel ! like thee,
 And call the stars to listen : every star
 Is deaf to mine, enamour'd of thy lay.

Yet be not vain ; there are who thine excel,
 And charm thro' distant ages : wrapt in shade, 445
 Pris'ner of darkness ! to the silent hours
 How often I repeat their rage divine,
 To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from woe !
 I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire.

Dark, tho' not blind, like thee, Mæonides ! 450
 Or, Milton ! thee ; ah cou'd I reach your strain !
 Or his, who made Mæonides our own.

Man too he sung : immortal man I sing :
 Oft bursts my song beyond the bounds of life ;
 What, now, but immortality can please ? 455

O had he press'd his theme, pursu'd the track
 Which opens out of darkness into day !
 O had he mounted on his wings of fire,
 Soar'd where I sink, and sung immortal man !
 How had it blest'd mankind, and rescu'd me ! 460

End of Night the First.

THE
COMPLAINT.

ON TIME, DEATH, FRIENDSHIP.

Humbly inscribed to the Right Hon.

The Earl of WILMINGTON.

NIGHT THE SECOND.

“WHEN the cock crew, he wept,”—smote by that eye,
Which looks on me, on all : that pow’r who bids
This midnight centinel with clarion shrill,
Emblem of that which shall awake the dead,
Rouse souls from slumber into thoughts of Heaven. 5
Shall I too weep ? Where then is fortitude ?
And fortitude abandon’d, where is man !
I know the terms on which he sees the light :
He that is born, is list’d : life is war,
Eternal war with woe : who bears it best, 10
Deserves it least.—On other themes I’ll dwell.
Lorenzo ! let me turn my thoughts on thee,
And thine on themes may profit ; profit there,
Where most thy need : Themes too, the genuine growth
Of dear Philander’s dust : He thus, tho’ dead, 15

May still befriend. What themes ? Time's wond'rous price ;
Death ; Friendship ; and Philander's final scene.

So could I touch these themes, as might obtain
Thine ear, nor leave thy heart quite disengag'd,
The good deed would delight me ; half impress 20
On my dark cloud an Iris ; and from grief
Call glory.—Dost thou mourn Philander's fate ?
I know thou say'st it : says thy life the same ?
He mourns the dead, who lives as they desire.

Where is that thrift, that avarice of Time, 25
(O glorious avarice !) thought of death inspires,
As rumour'd robberies endear our gold ?

O time ! than gold more sacred ; more a load
Than lead, to fools ; and fools reputed wise. 30

What moment granted man without account ?
What years are squander'd, Wisdom's debt unpaid ?
Our wealth in days, all due to that discharge.

Haste, haste, he lies in wait, he's at the door
Insidious death ! should his strong hand arrest,
No composition sets the pris'ner free : 35
Eternity's inexorable chain

Fast binds ; and vengeance claims the full arrears.

How late I shudder'd on the brink ! how late
Life call'd for her last refuge in despair !
That time is mine, O Mead ! to thee I owe : 40

Fain would I pay thee with eternity :
But ill my genius answers my desire ;
My sickly song is mortal, past thy cure.
Accept the will ;—that dies not with my strain.

For what calls thy disease, Lorenzo ? Not 45
For Esculapian, but for moral, aid.

Thou think'st it folly to be wise too soon.
Youth is not rich in time ; it may be poor :
Part with it as with money, sparing ; pay
No moment, but in purchase of its worth : 50

And what its worth, ask death-beds ; they can tell.
Part with it as with life, reluctant ; big
With holy hope of nobler time to come ;
Time higher-aim'd, still nearer the great mark
Of men and angels ; virtue more divine. 55
Is

NIGHT THE SECOND.

15

Is this our duty, wisdom, glory, gain ?
 (These Heav'n benign in vital union binds)
 And sport we like the natives of the bough,
 When vernal suns inspire ? Amusement reigns
 Man's great demand : to trifle is to live : 60
 And is it then a trifle, too, to die ?

Thou say'st I preach, Lorenzo ! 'Tis confess'd.
 What if, for once, I preach thee quite awake ?
 Who wants amusement in the flame of battle ?
 Is it not treason to the soul immortal, 65
 Her foes in arms, eternity the prize ?
 Will toys amuse, when med'cine cannot cure ?
 When spirits ebb, when life's enchanting scenes
 Their lustre lose, and lessen in our sight,
 (As lands, and cities with their glittering spires, 70
 To the poor shatter'd bark, by sudden storm
 Thrown off to sea, and soon to perish there ?)
 Will toys amuse ?—No : thrones will then be toys,
 And earth and skies seem dust upon the scale.

Redeem we time ?—Its loss we dearly buy. 75
 What pleads Lorenzo for his high-priz'd sports ?
 He pleads time's numerous blanks ; he loudly pleads
 The straw-like trifles on life's common stream.
 From whom those blanks and trifles, but from thee ?
 No blank, no trifle, Nature made, or meant. 80
 Virtue, or purpos'd virtue, still be thine :
 This cancels thy complaint at once : this leaves
 In act no trifle, and no blank in time :
 This greatens, fills, immortalizes all :
 This, the bless'd art of turning all to gold : 85
 This, the good heart's prerogative to raise
 A royal tribute from the poorest hours ;
 Immense revenue ! every moment pays.
 If nothing more than purpose in thy pow'r,
 Thy purpose firm is equal to the deed : 90
 Who does the best his circumstance allows,
 Does well, acts nobly ; angels could no more.
 Our outward act, indeed, admits restraint ;
 'Tis not in things o'er thoughts to domineer :
 Guard well thy thought ; our thoughts are heard in Heaven.

On

On all-important time, through every age,
 Tho' much, and warm, the wise have urg'd ; the man
 Is yet unborn, who duly weighs an hour.
 " I've lost a day,"—the Prince who nobly cry'd,
 Had been an emperor without his crown ; 100
 Of Rome ? Say, rather, lord of human race ;
 He spoke, as if deputed by mankind :
 So should all speak ; so Reason speaks in all.
 From the soft whispers of that god in man,
 Why fly to folly, why to frenzy fly, 105
 For rescue from the blessings we possess ?
 Time, the supreme !—Time is eternity ;
 Pregnant with all eternity can give ;
 Pregnant with all that makes archangels smile ;
 Who murders time, he crushes in the birth 110
 A pow'r ethereal, only not ador'd.

Ah ! how unjust to nature and himself,
 Is thoughtless, thankless, inconsistent, man !
 Like children babbling nonsense in their sports,
 We censure Nature for a span too short ; 115
 That span too short, we tax as tedious too ;
 Torture invention, all expedients tire,
 To lash the ling'ring moments into speed,
 And whirl us (happy riddance !) from ourselves.
 Art, brainless Art ! our furious charioteer, 120
 (For Nature's voice unstifled would recal)
 Drives headlong tow'rs the precipice of Death ;
 Death, most our dread ; Death, thus more dreadful made.
 O what a riddle of absurdity ?
 Leisure is pain ; takes off our chariot-wheels : 125
 How heavily we drag the load of life !
 Bless'd leisure is our curse : like that of Cain,
 It makes us wander ; wander earth around
 To fly that tyrant, Thought. As Atlas groan'd
 The world beneath, we groan beneath an hour. 130
 We cry for mercy to the next amusement ;
 The next amusement mortgages our fields ;
 Slight inconvenience ! prisons hardly frown,
 From hateful Time if prisons set us free.
 Yet when Death kindly tenders us relief, 135

We

We call him cruel ; years to moments shrink,
 Ages to years. The telescope is turn'd :
 To man's false optics (from his folly false)
 Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
 And seems to creep decrepit with his age : 140
 Behold him, when past by ; what then is seen,
 But his broad pinions swifter than the winds ?
 And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
 Rueful, aghast ! cry out on his career.

Leave to thy foes these errors, and these ills ; 145
 To Nature just, their cause and cure explore.

Not short Heav'n's bounty, boundless our expence ;
 No niggard, Nature ; men are prodigals.

We waste, not use, our time : we breathe, not live.
 Time wasted, is existence ; us'd, is life : 150

And bare existence, man, to live ordain'd,
 Wrings, and oppresses with enormous weight.

And why ? since Time was given for use, not waste ;
 Enjoin'd to fly ; with tempest, tide, and stars,

To keep his speed, nor ever wait for man ; 155
 Time's use was doom'd a pleasure ; waste a pain ;

That man might feel his error, if unseen ;

And, feeling, fly to labour for his cure :

Not blund'ring, split on idleness, for ease.

Life's cares are comforts ; such by Heav'n design'd ; 160
 He that has none, must make them, or be wretched.

Cares are employments, and without employ

The soul is on the rack ; the rack of rest,

To souls most adverse ; action all their joy.

Here, then, the riddle, mark'd above, unfolds ; 165
 Then time turns torment, when man turns a fool.

We rave, we wrestle with great Nature's plan ;

We thwart the Deity ! and 'tis decreed,

Who thwart his Will, shall contradict their own.

Hence our unnatural quarrel with ourselves ; 170

Our thoughts at enmity ; our bosom-broil ;

We push Time from us, and we wish him back ;

Lavish of lustrums, and yet fond of life :

Life we think long, and short ; Death seek, and shun ;

Body and soul, like peevish man and wife, 175

United

United jar, and yet are loth to part.
 Oh ! the dark days of vanity ! while here,
 How tasteless ! and how terrible, when gone !
 Gone ! they ne'er go ; when past, they haunt us still ;
 The spirit walks of ev'ry day deceas'd, 180
 And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns.
 Nor death, nor life, delight us. If time past,
 And time possess'd, both pain us, what can please ?
 That which the Deity to please ordain'd,
 Time us'd. The man who consecrates his hours 185
 By vig'rous effort, and an honest aim,
 At once he draws the sting of life and death :
 He walks with nature, and her paths are peace.
 Our error's cause and cure are seen : see next
 Time's nature, origin, importance, speed : 190
 And thy great gain from urging his career.—
 All-sensual man, because untouch'd, unseen,
 He looks on Time as nothing. Nothing else
 Is truly man's ; 'tis Fortune's—Time's a god.
 Hast thou ne'er heard of Time's omnipotence ? 195
 For, or against, what wonders can he do !
 And will : to stand blank neuter he disdains.
 Not on those terms was Time (Heav'n's stranger !) sent
 On his important embassy to man.
 Lorenzo ! no : on the long-destin'd hour, 200
 From everlasting ages growing ripe,
 That memorable hour of wond'rous birth,
 When the DREAD SIRE, on emanation bent,
 And bi with nature, rising in his might,
 Call'd forth creation (for then Time was born) 205
 By Godhead streaming thro' a thousand worlds :
 Not on those terms, from the great days of Heav'n,
 From old Eternity's mysterious orb,
 Was Time cut off, and cast beneath the skies ;
 The skies which watch him in his new abode, 210
 Meas'ring his motions by revolving spheres :
 That horologe machinery divine.
 Hours, days, and months, and years, his children play,
 Like numerous wings, around him, as he flies :
 Or, rather, as unequal plumes, they shape 215
 His

NIGHT THE SECOND.

19

His ample pinions, swift as darted flame,
To gain his goal, to reach his ancient rest,
And join anew Eternity his fire ;
In his immutability to rest,
When worlds, that count his circles now, unhing'd, 220
(Fate the loud signal sounding) headlong rush
To timeless night, and chaos, whence they rose.

Why spur the speedy ? why with levities
New-wing thy short, short day's too rapid flight ?
Know'st thou, or what thou dost, or what is done ? 225
Man flies from Time, and Time from man : too soon
In sad divorce this double flight must end :
And then, where are we ? where, Lorenzo ! then,
Thy sports ? thy pomps ?—I grant thee, in a state
Not unambitious ; in the ruffled shroud, 230
Thy Parian's tomb's triumphant arch beneath.
Has Death his fopperies ? then well may Life
Put on her plume, and in her rainbow shine.

Ye well-array'd ! ye lilies of our land !
Ye lilies male ! who neither toil nor spin, 235
(As sister lilies might) if not so wise
As Solomon, more sumptuous to the sight !
Ye delicate ! who nothing can support,
Yourself most insupportable ! for whom
The winter-rose must blow, the sun put on 240
A brighter beam in Leo ; silky-soft
Favonius breathe still softer, or be chid ;
And other worlds send odours, sauce, and song,
And robes, and notions, fram'd in foreign-loom !
O ye Lorenzo's of our age ! who deem 245
One moment unarm'd, a misery
Not made for feeble man ! who call aloud
For ev'ry bawble driv'd o'er by sense,
For rattles and conceits of every cast,
For change of follies, and relays of joy, 250
To drag your patient through the tedious length
Of a short winter's day ;—say, fages ! say,
Wit's oracles ! say, dreamers of gay dreams !
How will you weather an eternal night,
Where such expedients fail ? 255

O

O treach'rous Conscience ! while she seems to sleep
 On rose and myrtle, lul'd with syren song ;
 While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop
 On headlong appetite the slacken'd rein,
 And give us up to licence, unrecall'd, 260
 Unmark'd :—see, from behind her secret stand,
 The fly informer minutes every fault,
 And her dread diary with horror fills :
 Not the gross act alone employs her pen ;
 She reconnoitres Fancy's airy band, 265
 A watchful foe ! the formidable spy,
 List'ning o'erhears the whispers of our camp ;
 Our dawning purposes of heart explores,
 And steals our embryos of iniquity.
 As all-rapacious usurers conceal 270
 Their doomday-book, from all-consuming heirs ;
 Thus with indulgence most severe, she treats
 Us spendthrifts of inestimable Time ;
 Unnoted, notes each moment misapply'd ;
 In leaves more durable than leaves of brass, 275
 Writes our whole history ; which Death shall read
 In every pale delinquent's private ear ;
 And judgment publish ; publish to more worlds
 Than this, and endless age in groans resound.
 Lorenzo, such that sleeper in thy breast ! 280
 Such is her slumber, and her vengeance such,
 For slighted counsel ; such thy future peace !
 And think'st thou still thou canst be wise too soon ?
 But why on Time so lavish is my song ?
 On this great theme kind Nature keeps a school, 285
 To teach her sons herself. Each night we die,
 Each morn are born anew ; each day, a life !
 And shall we kill each day ? if trifling kills,
 Sure vice must butcher. O what heaps of slain
 Cry out for vengeance on us ! Time destroy'd 290
 Is suicide, where more than blood is spilt.
 Time flies, Death urges, knells call, Heaven invites,
 Hell threatens : All exerts ; in effort, all ;
 More than creation labours !—Labours more ?
 And is there in creation, what, amidst 295
 This

This tumult universal, wing'd dispatch,
 And ardent energy, supinely yawns?—
 Man sleeps; and man alone; and man, whose fate,
 Fate irreverfible, entire, extreme,
 Endlefs, hair-hung, breeze-shaken, o'er the gulph 300
 A moment trembles; drops! and man, for whom
 All elfe is in alarm; man, the fole caufe
 Of this furrrounding ftorm! and yet he fleeps,
 As the ftorm rock'd to reft.—Throw years away?
 Throw empires, and be blamelefs. Moments feize; 305
 Heav'n's on their wing: a moment we may wifh,
 When worlds want wealth to buy. Bid day ftand ftill;
 Bid him drive back his car, and reimport
 The period paft, regive the given hour.
 Lorenzo, more than miracles we want; 310
 Lorenzo—O for yefterdays to come!

Such is the language of the man awake;
 His ardor fuch, for what oppreffes thee.
 And is his ardor vain, Lorenzo? No;
 That more than miracle the gods indulge; 315
 To-day is yefterday return'd; return'd
 Full-power'd to cancel, expiate, raife, adorn,
 And reinftate us on the rock of peace.
 Let it not fhare its predecessor's fate;
 Nor, like its elder fifters, die a fool. 320
 Shall it evaporate in fume? fly off
 Fuliginous, and ftain us deeper ftill?
 Shall we be poorer for the plenty pour'd?
 More wretched for the clemencies of Heav'n?

Where fhall I find him? Angels, tell me where? 325
 You know him; he is near you: point him out:
 Shall I fee glories beaming from his brow?
 Or trace his footfteps by the rifing flow'rs?
 Your golden wings, now hov'ring o'er him, fhed
 Protection; now, are waving in applaufe 330
 To that blefs'd fon of forefight! lord of fate!
 That awful independent on to-morrow!
 Whofe work is done; who triumphs in the paft:
 Whofe yefterdays look backwards with a fmile;
 Nor, like the Parthian, wound him as they fly; 335

That

That common, but opprobrious lot ! past hours,
 If not by guilt, yet wound us by their flight,
 If Folly bounds our prospect by the grave,
 All feeling of futurity benumb'd ;
 All god-like passion for eternal quench'd ; 340
 All relish of realities expir'd ;
 Renounc'd all correspondence with the skies ;
 Our freedom chain'd ; quite winglefs our desire ;
 In sense dark-prison'd all that ought to soar ;
 Prone to the centre ; crawling in the dust ; 345
 Dismounted every great and glorious aim ;
 Embruted every faculty divine ;
 Heart-buried in the rubbish of the world ;
 The world, that gulph of souls, immortal souls,
 Souls elevate, angelic, wing'd with fire 350
 To reach the distant skies, and triumph there
 On thrones, which shal not mourn their masters chang'd ;
 Tho' we from earth ; etherial, they that fell.
 Such veneration due, O man, to man !
 Who venerate themselves, the world despise. 355
 For what, gay friend ! is this escutcheon'd world,
 Which hangs out DEATH in one eternal night ?
 A night, that glooms us in the noon-tide ray,
 And wraps our thoughts, at banquets, in the shroud.
 Life's little stage is a small eminence, 360
 Inch-high the grave above ; that home of man,
 Where dwells the multitude : we gaze around,
 We read their monuments ; we sigh ; and while
 We sigh, we sink, and are what we deplor'd ;
 Lamenting, or lamented, all our lot ! 365
 Is death at distance ? No : he has been on thee ;
 And given sure earnest of his final blow.
 Those hours which lately smil'd, where are they now ?
 Pallid to thought, and ghastly ! drown'd, all drown'd,
 In that great deep, which nothing disembogues ! 370
 And, dying, they bequeath'd thee small renown.
 The rest are on the wing ; how fleet their flight !
 Already has the fatal train took fire ;
 A moment, and the world's blown up to thee ;
 The sun is darkness, and the stars are dust. 375

NIGHT THE SECOND.

123

'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours ;
 And ask them, what report they bore to Heaven ;
 And how they might have borne more welcome news.
 Their answers form what men experience call ;
 If wisdom's friend, her best ; if not, worst foe. 380
 O reconcile them ; kind experience cries,
 " There's nothing here, but what as nothing weighs ;
 " The more our joy, the more we know it vain ;
 " And by success are tutor'd to despair."
 Nor is it only thus, but must be so. 386
 Who knows not this, tho' grey, is still a child.
 Loose then from earth the grasp of fond desire,
 Weigh anchor, and some happier clime explore.
 Art thou so moor'd thou canst not disengage,
 Nor give thy thoughts a ply to future scenes ? 390
 Since, by life's passing breath, b own up from earth,
 Light, as the summer's dust, we take in air
 A moment's giddy flight, and fall again ;
 Join the dull mass, increase the trodden soil,
 And sleep till earth herself shall be no more ; 395
 Since then (as emmets, their small world o'erthrown)
 We, fore amaz'd, from out earth's ruins crawl,
 And rise to fate extreme of foul or fair,
 As man's own choice (controller of the skies !)
 As man's despotic will, perhaps one hour, 400
 (O how omnipotent is Time !) decrees ;
 Should not each warning give us a strong alarm ?
 Warning, far less than that of bosom torn
 From bosom, bleeding o'er the sacred dead !
 Should not each dial strike us as we pass, 405
 Portentous, as the written wa i, which struck,
 O'er midnight bowls, the proud Assyrian pale,
 Ere-while high-flush'd with insolence and wine ?
 Like that, the dial speaks ; and points to thee,
 Lorenzo ! loth to break thy banquet up : 410
 " O man, thy kingdom is departing from thee ;
 " And, while it lasts, is emptier than thy shade."
 Its silent language such ; nor need'st thou call
 Thy Magi, to decypher what it means.
 Know, like the Midian, fate is in thy walls : 415
 Dost

Dost ask, how? whence? Belshazzar-like, amaz'd?
 Man's make incloses the sure seeds of death;
 Life feeds the murderer: ingrate! he thrives
 On her own meal, and then his nurse devours.

•But, here, Lorenzo, the delusion lies; 420

That solar shadow, as it measures life,
 It life resembles too: life speeds away
 From point to point, tho' seeming to stand still.

The cunning fugitive is swift by stealth:
 Too subtle is the movement to be seen: 425

Yet soon man's hour is up, and we are gone.
 Warnings point out our danger; gnomons, time:

As these are useless when the sun is set;
 So these, but when more glorious reason shines.

Reason should judge in all; in reason's eye,
 That sedentary shadow travels hard. 430

But such our gravitation to the wrong,
 So prone our hearts to whisper what we wish,
 'Tis later with the wise than he's aware;

A Wilmington goes slower than the sun; 435

And all mankind mistake their time of day;

Ev'n age itself. Fresh hopes are hourly sown

In furrow'd brows. So gentle life's descent,

We shut our eyes, and think it is a plain.

We take fair days in winter for the spring; 440

And turn our blessings into bane. Since oft

Man must compute that age he cannot feel,

He scarce believes he's older for his years.

Thus, at life's latest eve, we keep in store

One disappointment sure to crown the rest, 445

The disappointment of a promis'd hour.

On this, or similar, Philander! thou

Whose mind was moral, as the preacher's tongue;

And strong, to wield all science, worth the name;

How often we talked down the summer's sun, 450

And cool'd our passions by the breezy stream!

How often thaw'd and shorten'd winter's eve,

By conflict kind, that struck our latent truth,

Best found, so sought; to the recluse more coy!

Thoughts disentangle passing o'er the lip; 455

Clean

Clean runs the thread ; if not, 'tis thrown away,
 Or kept to tie up nonsense for a song ;
 Song, fashionably fruitless ; such as stains
 The fancy, and unhallow'd passion fires ;
 Chiming her fancies to Cytherea's fane.

460

Know'st thou, Lorenzo! what a friend contains ?
 As bees mix'd nectar draw from fragrant flow'rs,
 So men from FRIENDSHIP, wisdom and delight :
 Twins ty'd by nature ; if they part, they die.
 Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroad ?
 Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up, want air,
 And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.
 Had thought been all, sweet speech had been deny'd ;
 Speech, thought's canal ; speech, thought's criterion too !
 Thought in the mine, may come forth gold or dross ;
 When coin'd in word, we know its real worth.

465

470

If sterling, store it for thy future use ;
 'Twill buy thee benefit ; perhaps, renown.
 Thought, too, deliver'd, is the more possess'd ;
 Teaching, we learn ; and, giving, we retain
 The births of intellect ; when dumb, forgot.

475

Speech ventilates our intellectual fire ;
 Speech burnishes our mental magazine ;
 Brightens, for ornament ; and whets, for use.

480

What numbers, sheath'd in erudition, lie
 Plung'd to the hilts in venerable tomes,
 And rusted in ; who might have borne an edge,
 And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech ;
 If born blest heirs to half their mother's tongue ?

'Tis thought's exchange, which like th' alternate push
 Of waves conflicting, breaks the learned scum,
 And defecates the student's standing pool.

485

In contemplation is his proud resource ?

'Tis poor, as proud, by converse unsustain'd.

Rude thought runs wild in contemplation's field ;

490

Converse the menage, breaks it to the bit

Of due restraint ; and emulation's spur

Gives graceful energy, by rivals aw'd.

'Tis converse qualifies for solitude ;

As exercise, for salutary rest.

495

By

C

By that untutor'd, contemplation raves ;
And nature's fool, by wisdom is outdone.

Wisdom, though richer than Peruvian mines,
And sweeter than the sweet ambrosial hive,

What is she but the means of happiness ?

500

That unobtain'd, than folly more a fool ;

A melancholy fool, without her bells.

Friendship, the means of wisdom, richly gives

The precious end, which makes our wisdom wise.

Nature, in zeal for human amity,

505

Denies or damps an undivided joy.

Joy is an import ; joy is an exchange ;

Joy flies monopolists : it calls for two :

Rich fruit ! heav'n-planted ! never pluck'd by one.

Needful auxiliars are our friends, to give

510

To social man true relish of himself.

Full on ourselves descending in a line

Pleasure's bright beam is feeble in delight :

Delight intense is taken by rebound :

Reverberated pleasures fire the breast.

515

Celestial happiness, whene'er she stoops

To visit earth, one shrine the goddess finds,

And one alone, to make her sweet amends

For absent Heav'n—the bosom of a friend ;

Where heart meets heart, reciprocally soft,

520

Each other's pillow to repose divine.

Beware the counterfeit : in passion's flame

Hearts melt ; but melt like ice, soon harder froze.

True love strikes root in Reason ; Passion's foe :

Virtue alone entenders us for life ;

525

I wrong her much—entenders us for ever.

Of friendship's fairest fruits, the fruit most fair,

Is virtue kindling at a rival fire,

And emulously rapid in her race.

O the soft enmity ! endearing strife !

530

This carries friendship to her noon-tide point,

And gives the rivet of eternity.

From friendship, which outlives my former themes,
Glorious survivor of old Time and Death !

From friendship, thus, that flow'r of heav'nly seed,

535

The wise extract earth's most Hyblean bliss,

Superior wisdom, crown'd with smiling joy.

But for whom blossoms this Elysian flow'r?
 Abroad they find, who cherish it at home.
 Lorenzo! pardon what my love extorts, 540
 An honest love, and not afraid to frown.
 Tho' choice of follies fasten on the great,
 None clings more obstinate, than fancy fond,
 That sacred friendship is their easy prey;
 Caught by the wasture of a golden lure, 545
 Or fascination of a high-born smile.
 Their smiles, the great, and the coquet, throw out
 For other hearts, tenacious of their own;
 And we no less of ours, when such the bait.
 Ye Fortune's cofferers! ye pow'rs of wealth! 550
 You do your rent-rolls most felonious wrong,
 By taking our attachment to yourselves.
 Can gold gain friendship? Impudence of hope!
 As well mere man an angel might beget.
 Love, and love only, is the loan for love. 555
 Lorenzo! pride repress; nor hope to find
 A friend, but what has found a friend in thee.
 All like the purchase; few the price will pay;
 And this makes friends such miracles below.
 What if (since daring on so nice a theme) 560
 I shew thee friendship delicate, as dear,
 Of tender violations apt to die?
 Reserve will wound it; and distrust, destroy.
 Deliberate on all things with thy friend;
 But since friends grow not thick on ev'ry tongue, 565
 Nor ev'ry friend unrotten at the core;
 First, on thy friend, delib'rate with thyself;
 Pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice,
 Nor jealous of the chosen; fixing, fix;
 Judge before friendship, then connde till death. 570
 Well, for thy friend; but nobler far for thee;
 How gallant danger for earth's highest prize!
 A friend is worth all hazard we can run.
 "Poor is the friendless master of a world:
 "A world in purchase for a friend is gain." 575
 So sung he (angels hear that angel sing!
 Angels from friendship gather half their joy)

So sung Philander, as his friend went round
 In the rich ichor, in the generous blood
 Of Bacchus, purple god of joyous wit, 580
 A brow solute, and ever-laughing eye.
 He drank long health, and virtue to his friend ;
 His friend, who warm'd him more, who more inspir'd.
 Friendship's the wine of life ; but friendship new
 (Not such was his) is neither strong, nor pure. 585
 O ! for the bright complexion, cordial warmth,
 And elevating spirit, of a friend,
 For twenty summers rip'ning by my side ;
 All feculence of falshood long thrown down ;
 All social virtues rising in his soul ; 590
 As crystal clear ; and smiling as they rise !
 Here nectar flows ; it sparkles in our sight ;
 Rich to the taste, and genuine from the heart.
 High-flavour'd blis for gods ! on earth how rare !
 On earth how lost !—Philander is no more. 595
 Think'ft thou the theme intoxicates my song ?
 Am I too warm ? too warm I cannot be.
 I lov'd him much ; but now I love him more.
 Like birds, whose beauties languish, half conceal'd,
 Till, mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes 600
 Expanded shine with azure, green, and gold ;
 How blessings brighten as they take their flight !
 His flight Philander took ; his upward flight,
 If ever soul ascended. Had he dropt,
 (That eagle genius !) O had he let fall 605
 One feather as he flew ; I, then, had wrote
 What friends might flatter ; prudent foes forbear ;
 Rivals scarce damn ; and Zoilus reprieve.
 Yet what I can I must : it were profane
 To quench a glory lighted at the skies, 610
 And cast in shadows his illustrious close.
 Strange ! the theme most affecting, most sublime,
 Momentous most to man, shou'd sleep unsung !
 And yet it sleeps, by genius unawak'd,
 Paimon or Christian, to the blush of wit. 615
 Man's highest triumph ! man's profoundest fall !
 The death-bed of the just ! is yet undrawn

By mortal hand ; it merits a divine :
 Angels should paint it, angels ever there ;
 There, on a post of honour, and of joy. 620

Dare I presume, then ? But Philander bids ;
 And glory tempts, and inclination calls—
 Yet am I struck ; as struck the soul, beneath
 Aerial groves impenetrable gloom ;
 Or, in some mighty ruin's solemn shade ; 625
 Or, gazing by pale lamps on high-born dust,
 In vaults ! thin courts of poor unflatter'd kings !
 Or, at the midnight altar's hallow'd flame.

It is religion to proceed : I pause —
 And enter, aw'd, the temple of my theme. 630
 Is it his death-bed ! No, it is his shrine ;
 Behold him, theee, just rising to a god.

The chamber, where the good man meets his fate,
 Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
 Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of Heaven. 635
 Fly, ye profane ! if not, draw near with awe,
 Receive the blessing, and adore the chance,
 That threw in this Bethesda your disease ;
 If unrestor'd by this, despair your cure.
 For, here, resistless demonstration dwells ; 640
 A death-bed's a detector of the heart.

Here tir'd Dissimulation drops her masque,
 Thro' life's grimace, that mistress of the scene !
 Here *real* and *apparent* are the same :
 You see the man ; you see his hold on Heav'n ; 645
 If sound his virtue ; as Philander's sound.
 Heav'n waits not the last moment ; owns her friends
 On this side death ; and points them out to men,
 A lecture, silent, but of sov'reign pow'r !
 To vice, confusion ; and to virtue, peace. 650

Whatever farce the boastful hero plays,
 Virtue alone has majesty in death ;
 And greater still the more the tyrant frowns.
 Philander ! he severely frown'd on thee.

“ No warning giv'n ! unceremonious fate ! 655
 “ A sudden rush from life's meridian joys !
 “ A wrench from all we love ! from all we are !

" A restless bed of pain ! a plunge opaque
 " Beyond conjecture ! feeble nature's dread !
 " Strong Reason's shudder at the dark unknown ! 660
 " A sun extinguish'd ! a just opening grave !
 " And, oh ! the last, last, what ? (can words express ?
 " Thought reach it ?) the last—silence of a friend ?"

Where are those horrors, that amazement, where,
 This hideous group of ills, which singly shock, 665
 Demands from man ?—I thought him man till now.

Thro' nature's wreck, thro' vanquish'd agonies,
 (Like the stars struggling thro' this midnight gloom)
 What gleams of joy ! what more than human peace !
 Where, the frail mortal ? the poor abject worm ? 670
 No, not in death, the mortal to be found.

His conduct is a legacy for all,
 Richer than Mammon's for his single heir.
 His comforters he comforts ; great in ruin,
 With unreluctant grandeur gives, not yields, 675
 His soul sublime, and closes with his fate.

Now our hearts burnt within us at the scene !
 Whence this brave bound o'er limits fix'd to man ?
 His God sustains him in his final hour !
 His final hour brings glory to his God ! 680
 Man's glory Heav'n vouchsafes to call her own.
 We gaze, we weep ; mixt tears of grief and joy !
 Amazement strikes ! Devotion bursts to flame !
 Christians adore ! and Infidels believe !

As some tall tower, or lofty mountain's brow, 685
 Detains the sun, illustrious from its height ;
 While rising vapours, and descending shades,
 With damps, and darkness, drown the spacious vale :
 Undamp'd by doubt, undarken'd by despair,
 Philander, thus, augustly rears his head, 690
 At that black hour, which gen'ral horror sheds
 On the low level of th' inglorious throng :
 Sweet Peace, and heavenly Hope, and humble Joy,
 Divinely beam on his exalted soul ;
 Destruction gild, and crown him for the skies, 695
 With incommunicable lustre, bright.

End of Night the Second.

THE
COMPLAINT.

NARCISSA.

Ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes.—VIRG.

Inscribed to her Grace
THE DUCHESS OF P—.

NIGHT THE THIRD.

FROM dreams, where thought in fancy's maze runs mad,
To reason, that Heav'n-lighted lamp in man,
Once more I 'wake; and at the destin'd hour,
Punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,
I keep my assignation with my woe. 5

O! lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul!
Who think it solitude to be alone.
Communion sweet! communion large and high!
Our reason, guardian angel, and our God! 10
Then nearest these, when others most remote;
And a l, ere long, shall be remote, but these.
How dreadful, then, to meet them all alone,
A stranger! unacknowledg'd! unprov'd!
Now woo them; wed them; bind them to thy breast: 15
To win thy wish, creation has no more.

Or if we wish a fourth, it is a friend——

But friends, how mortal! dang'rous the desire.

Take Phœbus to yourselves, ye basking bards!

Inebriate at fair fortune's fountain-head,

20

And reeling thro' the wilderness of joy;

Where sense runs Savage, broke from Reason's chain,

And sings false peace, till smother'd by the pall.

My fortune is unlike; unlike my song;

Unlike the deity my song invokes.

25

I to Day's soft-ey'd sister pay my court,

(Endymion's rival!) and her aid implore;

Now first implor'd in succour to the muse.

Thou who didst lately borrow * Cynthia's form,

And most leſtly forego thine own! O thou,

30

Who didst thyself, at midnight hours, inspire!

Say, why not Cynthia patroness of song?

As thou her crescent, she thy character

Assumes; still more a goddess by the change.

Are there demurring wits who dare dispute

35

This revolution in the world inspir'd?

Ye train Pierian! to the lunar sphere,

In silent hour, address your ardent call

For aid immortal, lest her brother's right.

She with the spheres harmonious nightly leads

40

The mazy dance, and hears their matchless strain;

A strain for gods, deny'd to mortal ear.

Transmit it heard, thou silver Queen of Heav'n!

What title or what name endears thee most?

Cynthia! Cyllene! Phœbe!—or dost hear

45

With higher gust, fair P——d of the skies?

Is that the soft enchantment calls thee down,

More pow'rful than of old Circean charm?

Come, but from heav'nly banquets with thee bring

The soul of song, and whisper in mine ear

50

The theft divine; or in propitious dreams

(For dreams are thine) transfuse it thro' the breast

Of thy first votary—but not thy last,

If, like thy namesake, thou art ever kind.

And

* At the duke of Norfolk's masquerade.

And kind thou wilt be, kind on such a theme ; 55
 A theme so like thee, a quite lunar theme,
 Soft, modest, melancholy, female, fair !
 A theme that rose all pale, and told my soul
 'Twas night ; on her fond hopes perpetual night ;
 A night which struck a damp, a deadlier damp, 60
 Than that which smote me from Philander's tomb.
 Narcissa follows ere his tomb is clos'd.
 Woes cluster ; rare are solitary woes ;
 They love a train ; they tread each other's heel ;
 Her death invades his mournful right, and claims 65
 The grief that started from my lids for him ;
 Seizes the faithless, alienated tear,
 Or shares it ere it falls. So frequent Death,
 Sorrow he more than causes ; he confounds ;
 For human sighs his rival strokes contend, 70
 And makes distress distraction. Oh, Philander !
 What was thy fate ? a double fate to me ;
 Portent and pain ! a menace and a blow !
 Like the black raven hov'ring o'er my peace,
 Not less a bird of omen than of prey. 75
 It call'd Narcissa long before her hour ;
 It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss,
 From the first blossom, from the buds of joy ;
 Those few our noxious fate unblasted leaves
 In this inclement clime of human life. 80
 Sweet Harmonist ! and beautiful as sweet !
 And young as beautiful ! and soft as young !
 And gay as soft ! and innocent as gay !
 And happy (if aught happy here) as good !
 For Fortune fond had built her nest on high. 85
 Like birds quite exquisite of note and plume,
 Transfix'd by Fate (who loves a lofty mark)
 How from the summit of the grove she fell,
 And left it unharmonious ! all its charm
 Extinguish'd in the wonders of her song ; 90
 Her song still vibrates in my ravish'd ear,
 Still melting there, and with voluptuous pain
 (O to forget her) thrilling thro' my heart !
 Song, beauty, youth, love, virtue, joy ! this group

Of bright ideas, flow'rs of Paradise, 95
 As yet unforfeit ! in one blaze we bind,
 Kneel, and present it to the skies, as all
 We guess of heav'n ; and these were all her own ;
 And she was mine ; and I was—was !—moist blest—
 Gay title of the deepest misery. 100

As bodies grow more pond'rous robb'd of life,
 Good lost weighs more in grief than gain'd in joy.
 Like blossom'd trees o'erturn'd by vernal storm,
 Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay ;
 And if in death still lovely, lovelier there, 105
 Far lovelier ! Pity swells the tide of love.
 And will not the severe excuse a sigh ?
 Scorn the proud man that is asham'd to weep.
 Our tears indulg'd, indeed deserve our shame.
 Yet that e'er lost an angel, pity me ! 110

Soon as the lustre languish'd in her eye,
 Dawning a dimmer day on human sight,
 And on her cheek, the residence of Spring,
 Pale Omen sat, and scatter'd fears around
 On all that saw (and who would cease to gaze 115
 That once had seen ?) with haste, parental haste,
 I flew, I snatch'd her from the rigid north,
 Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,
 And bore her nearer to the sun : the sun
 (As if the sun could envy) check'd his beam, 120
 Deny'd his wonted succour ; or with more
 Regret beheld her drooping than the bells
 Of lilies ; fairest lilies, not so fair !

Queen lilies ; and ye painted populace,
 Who dwell in fields, and lead ambrosial lives ! 125
 In morn and ev'ning dew your beauties bathe,
 And drink the sun, which gives your cheeks to glow,
 And out blush (mine excepted) ev'ry fair ;
 You gladlier grew, ambitious of her hand,
 Which often crompt your odours, incense meet 130
 To thought so pure ! Ye lovely fugitives !
 Coeval race with man ! for man you smile ;
 Why not smile at him too ? You share, indeed,
 His sudden pass, but not his constant pain.

So man is made, nought ministers delight, 135
 But what his glowing passions can engage !
 And glowing passions, bent on aught below,
 Must, soon or late, with anguish turn the scale ;
 And anguish after rapture, how severe !
 Rapture ! bold man ! who tempts the wrath divine, 140
 By plucking fruit deny'd to mortal taste,
 While here presuming on the rights of Heav'n.
 For transport dost thou call on ev'ry hour,
 Lorenzo ? At thy friend's expence be wise :
 Lean not on earth ; 'twill pierce thee to the heart : 145
 A broken reed at best ; but oft a spear :
 On its sharp point Peace bleeds, and Hope expires.

Turn, hopeless thought ! turn from her.—Thought repell'd,
 Resenting rallies, and wakes ev'ry woe.
 Snatch'd ere thy prime ! and in thy bridal hour ! 150
 And when kind fortune, with thy lover, smil'd !
 And when high-flavour'd thy fresh-op'ning joys !
 And when blind man pronounc'd thy bliss complete !
 And on a foreign shore, where strangers wept !
 Strangers to thee, and, more surprising still, 155
 Strangers to kindness, wept. Their eyes let fall
 Inhuman tears ; strange tears ! that trickled down
 From marble hearts ! obdurate tenderneis !
 A tenderneis that call'd them more severe,
 In spite of Nature's soft persuasion steel'd ! 160
 While Nature melted, Superstition rav'd ;
That mourn'd the dead, and *this* deny'd a grave.

Their sighs incens'd ; sighs foreign to the will !
 Their will the tiger suck'd, outrag'd the storm :
 For, oh ! the curs'd ungodlineis of zeal ! 165
 While sinful flesh relented, spirit nurs'd
 In blind infallibility's embrace,
 The fainted spirit petrify'd the breast,
 Deny'd the charity of dust to spread
 O'er dust ! a charity their dogs enjoy. 170
 What could I do ? what succour ? what resource ?
 With pious sacrilege a grave I stole ;
 With impious piety that grave I wrong'd ;
 Short in my duty, coward in my grief !

More like her murderer than friend, I crept 175
 With soft suspended step, and, muffled deep
 In midnight darkness, whisper'd my last sigh.
 I whisper'd what should echo thro' their realms :
 Nor writ her name, whose tomb should pierce the skies.
 Presumptuous fear ! how durst I dread her foes, 180
 While Nature's loudest dictates I obey'd ?
 Pardon necessity, blest shade ! of grief
 And indignation rival bursts I pour'd ;
 Half-execration mingl'd with my prayer ;
 Kindl'd at man, while I his God ador'd : 185
 Sore grudg'd the savage land her sacred dust ;
 Stamp'd the curs'd soil ; and with humanity
 (Deny'd Narcissa) wish'd them all a grave.
 Glows my resentment into guilt ? what guilt
 Can equal violations of the dead ? 190
 The dead how sacred ? sacred is the dust
 Of this heav'n-labour'd form, erect, divine !
 This heav'n-assum'd, majestic, robe of earth
 He deign'd to wear, who hung the vast expanse
 With azure bright, and cloth'd the sun in gold. 195
 When ev'ry passion sleeps that can offend ;
 When strikes us ev'ry motive that can melt ;
 When man can wreak his rancour uncontroll'd,
 That strongest curb on insult and ill-will ;
 Then, spleen to dust ! the dust of innocence ! 200
 An angel's dust !—This Lucifer transcends ;
 When he contended for the Patriarch's bones,
 'Twas not the strife of malice, but of pride ;
 The strife of pontiff pride, not pontiff gall.
 Far less than this is shocking in a race 205
 Most wretched, but from streams of mutual love,
 And uncreated, but for love divine ;
 And, but for love divine, this moment lost,
 By Fate resorb'd, and sunk in endless night.
 Man hard of heart to man ! of horrid things 210
 Most horrid ! 'mid stupendous, highly strange !
 Yet oft his courtesies are smother wrongs ;
 Pride brandishes the favours he confers,
 And contumelious his humanity :

What

What then his vengeance ? Hear it not, ye stars ! 215
 And thou, pale moon ! turn paler at the sound.
 Man is to man the forest, surest ill.
 A previous blast foretels the rising storm :
 O'erwhelming turrets threaten ere they fall ;
 Volcanos bellow ere they disembogue ; 220
 Earth trembles ere her yawning jaws devour ;
 And smoke betrays the wide consuming fire :
 Ruin from man is most conceal'd when near,
 And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow.
 Is this the flight of fancy ? would it were ! 225
 Heav'n's sov'reign saves all beings, but himself,
 That hideous sight, a naked human heart.

Fir'd is the Muse ? and let the Muse be fir'd :
 Who not inflam'd when what he speaks he feels,
 And in the nerve most tender, in his friends ? 230
 Shame to mankind ! Philander had his foes ;
 He felt the truths I sing, and I in him :
 But he nor I feel more. Past ills, Narcissa !
 Are sunk in thee, thou recent wound of heart !
 Which bleeds with other cares, with other pangs ; 235
 Pangs num'rous as the num'rous ills that swarm'd
 O'er thy distinguish'd fate, and, clust'ring there,
 Thick as the locust on the land of Nile,
 Made death more deadly, and more dark the grave.
 Reflect (if not forgot thy touching tale). 240
 How was each circumstance with aspicks arm'd !
 An aspick each, and all an hydra woe.
 What strong Herculean virtue could suffice ?—
 Or is it virtue to be conquer'd here ?
 This hoary cheek a train of tears bedews, 245
 And each tear mourns its own distinct distress ;
 And each distress, distinctly mourn'd, demands
 Of grief still more, as heighten'd by the whole.
 A grief like this proprietors excludes :
 Not friends alone such obsequies deplore ; 250
 They make mankind the mourner ; carry sighs
 Far as the fatal Fame can wing her way,
 And turn the gayest thought of gayest age
 Down the right channel, thro' the vale of death.

The

The vale of Death ! that hush'd Cimmerian vale, 255
 Where Darkneſs brooding o'er unfinish'd fates,
 With raven wing incumbent, waits the day
 (Dread day !) that interdicts all future change !
 That ſubterranean world, that land of ruin !
 Fit walk, Lorenzo, for proud human thought ! 260
 There let my thought expatiate, and explore
 Baſmamic truths and healing ſentiments,
 Of all moſt wanted, and moſt welcome here.
 For gay Lorenzo's ſake, and for thy own,
 My ſoul ! " The fruits of dying friends ſurvey ; 265
 " Expoſe the vain of life ; weigh life and death ;
 " Give death his eulogy ; thy fear ſubdue ;
 " And labour that firſt palm of noble minds ;
 " A manly ſcorn of terror from the tomb."
 This harveſt reap from thy Narciſſa's grave. 270
 As poet's feign'd, from Ajax' ſtreaming blood
 Aroſe, with grief inſcrib'd, a mournful flow'r,
 Let wiſdom bloſſom from my mortal wound.
 And firſt, of dying friends ; what fruit from theſe ?
 It brings us more than triple aid ; an aid 275
 To chace our thoughtleſſneſs, fear, pride, and guilt.
 Our dying friends come o'er us, like a cloud,
 To damp our brainleſs ardours, and abate
 That glare of life which often blinds the wiſe.
 Our dying friends are pioneers, to ſmooth 280
 Our rugged path to death ; to break thoſe bars
 Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws
 Croſs our obſtructed way, and thus to make
 Welcome, as ſafe, our port from ev'ry ſtorm.
 Each friend by Fate ſnatch'd from us, is a plume 285
 Pluck'd from the wing of human vanity,
 Which makes us ſtoop from our aeral heights,
 And damp'd with omen of our own diſeaſe,
 On drooping pinions of ambition lower'd,
 Juſt ſkim earth's ſurface ere we break it up, 290
 O'er putrid earth to ſcratch a little duſt,
 And ſave the world a nuisance. Smitten friends
 Are angels, ſent on errands full of love ;
 For us they languish, and for us they die :

And

And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain ? 295
 Ungrateful, shall we grieve their hov'ring shades,
 Which wait the revo'ution in our hearts ?
 Shall we disdain their silent, soft, address,
 Their posthumous advice, and pious pray'r !
 Senseless, as herds that graze their hallow'd graves, 300
 Tread under foot their agonies and groans,
 Frustrate their anguish, and destroy their deaths ?

Lorenzo ! no ; the thought of death indulge ;
 Give it its wholesome empire ! let it reign,
 That kind chastiser of the soul in joy ! 305
 Its reign will spread thy glorious conquests far,
 And still the tumults of thy ruffled breast.
 Auspicious æra ! golden days, begin !
 The thought of death shall, like a god, inspire.
 And why not think on death ? Is life the theme 310
 Of ev'ry thought ? and wish of ev'ry hour ?
 And song of ev'ry joy ? Surprising truth !
 The beaten spaniel's fondness not so strange.
 To wave the num'rous ill's that seize on life
 As their own property, their lawful prey ; 315
 Ere man has measur'd half his weary stage,
 His luxuries have left him no reserve,
 No maiden relishes, unbroach'd delights ;
 On cold-serv'd repetitions he subsists,
 And in the tasteless present chews the past ; 320
 Disgusted chews, and scarce can swallow down,
 Like lavish ancestors, his earlier years
 Have disinherited his future hours,
 Which starve on orts, and glean their former field.

Live ever here, Lorenzo !—shocking thought ! 325
 So shocking, they who wish disown it too ;
 Disown from shame what they from folly crave.
 Live ever in the womb, nor see the light !
 For what live ever here ?—with lab'ring step
 To tread our former footsteps ? pace the round 330
 Eternal ? to climb life's worn heavy wheel,
 Which draws up nothing new ? to beat, and beat
 The beaten track ? to bid each wretched day
 The former mock ? to surfeit on the same,

And yawn our joys ? or thank a misery 335
 For change, tho' sad ? to see what we have seen ?
 Hear, till unheard, the same old slabber'd tale
 To taste the tasted, and at each return
 Less tasteful ? o'er our palates to decant
 Another vintage ? strain a flatter year 340
 Thro' loaded vessels, and a laxer tone !
 Crazy machines to grind earth's wasted fruits !
 Ill ground, and worse concocted ! load, not life !
 The rational foul kennels of excess !
 Still-streaming thoroughfares of dull debauch ! 345
 Trembling each gulp, lest death should snatch the bowl.

Such of our fine ones is the wish refin'd !
 So would they have it : elegant desire !
 Why not invite the bellowing stalls and wilds !
 But such examples might their riot awe. 350
 Thro' want of virtue, that is, want of thought,
 (Tho' on bright thought they father all their flights)
 To what are they reduc'd ? to love and hate
 The same vain world ; to censure and espouse
 This painted shrew of life, who calls them fool 355
 Each moment of each day ; to flatter bad
 Thro' dread of worse ? to cling to this rude rock,
 Barren, to them, of good, and sharp with ills,
 And hourly blacken'd with impending storms,
 And infamous for wrecks of human hope— 360
 Scar'd at the gloomy gulph that yawns beneath.
 Such are their triumphs ! such their pangs of joy !

'Tis time, high time, to shift this dismal scene.
 This hugg'd, this hideous state, what art can cure ?
 One only ; but that one what all may reach : 365
 Virtue—she, wonder-working-goddes ! charms
 That rock to bloom, and tames the painted shrew ;
 And, what will more surprise, Lorenzo ! gives
 To life's sick, nauseous, iteration, change,
 And straightens Nature's circle to a line. 370
 Believ'st thou this, Lorenzo ! lend an ear,
 A patient ear, thou'lt blush to disbelieve.

A languid, leaden iteration reigns,
 And ever must, o'er those whose joys are joys

Of

NIGHT THE THIRD.

41

Of sight, smell, taste. The cuckoo-seasons sing 375
 The small dull note to such as nothing prize
 But what those seasons, from the teeming earth,
 To doating sense indulge : but nobler minds,
 Which relish fruits unripen'd by the sun,
 Make their days various as the dyes 380
 On the dove's neck, which wanton in his rays.
 On minds of dove-like innocence possess'd,
 On lighten'd minds, that bask in virtue's beams,
 Nothing hangs tedious, nothing old revolves
 In that for which they long, for which they live : 385
 Their glorious efforts, wing'd with heav'nly hope,
 Each rising morning sees still higher rise ;
 Each bounteous dawn its novelty presents
 To worth maturing, new strength, lustre, fame ;
 While Nature's circle, like a chariot-wheel 390
 Rolling beneath their elevated aims,
 Makes their fair prospect fairer ev'ry hour ;
 Advancing virtue in a line to bliss ;
 Virtue, which Christian motives best inspire !
 And bliss, which Christian schemes alone ensure ! 395
 And shall we then, for virtue's sake, commence
 Apostates, and turn infidels for joy ?
 A truth it is few doubt, but fewer trust,
 " He sins against this life who slights the next."
 What is this life ? how few their fav'rite know ? 400
 Fond in the dark, and blind in our embrace,
 By passionately loving life, we make
 Lov'd life unlovely, hugging her to death.
 We give to time eternity's regard,
 And, dreaming, take our passage for our port. 405
 Life has no value as an end, but means ;
 An end deplorable ! a means divine !
 When 'tis our all, 'tis nothing ; worse than nought ;
 A nest of pains ; when held as nothing, much.
 Like some fair hum'rists, life is most enjoy'd 410
 When courted least ; most worth when disesteem'd ;
 Then 'tis the seat of comfort, rich in peace ;
 In prospect richer far ! important ! awful !
 Not to be mention'd but with shouts of praise !

Not

Not to be thought on but with tides of joy ! 415
The mighty basis of eternal bliss !

Where now the barren rock ? the painted shrew ?
Where now, Lorenzo, life's eternal round ?
Have I not made my triple promise good ?
Vain is the world ; but only to the vain. 420

To what compare we then this varying scene,
Whose worth ambiguous, rises and declines,
Waxes and wanes ? (In all propitious, Night
Assists me here) compare it to the moon ;
Dark in herself, and indigent ; but rich 425
In borrow'd lustre from a higher sphere.

When gross guilt interposes, lab'ring earth,
O'ershadow'd, mourns a deep eclipse of joy ;
Her joys, at brightest, pallid to that font
Of full effulgent glory whence they flow. 430

Nor is that glory distant. Oh, Lorenzo,
A good man and an angel ! these between
How thin the barrier ! what divides their fate ?
Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year ;
Or if an age, it is a moment still ; 435
A moment, or eternity's forgot.

Then be what once they were who now are gods ;
Be what Philander was, and claim the skies.
Starts timid Nature at the gloomy pass ?
The soft transition call it, and be cheer'd : 440
Such it is often, and why not to thee ?

To hope the best is pious, brave, and wise,
And may itself procure what it presumes.
Life is much flatter'd, Death is much traduc'd ;
Compare the rivals, and the kinder crown. 445
" Strange competition !" — True, Lorenzo, strange !
So little life can cast into the scale.

Life makes the soul dependent on the dust !
Death gives her wings to mount above the spheres.
Thro' chinks, styl'd organs, dim life peeps at light ; 450
Death bursts th'involving cloud, and all is day :
All eye, all ear, the disembod' d pow'r.
Death has feign'd evils nature shall not feel ;
Life, ills substantial, wisdom cannot shun.

NIGHT THE THIRD.

43

Is not the mighty mind, that sun of Heav'n, 455
By tyrant Life dethron'd, imprison'd, pain'd ?
By death enlarg'd, ennobled, deify'd ?
Death but intombs the body, life the soul.

" Is death then guiltless ? how he marks his way
" With dreadful waste of what deserves to shine ! 460
" Art, genius, fortune, elevated pow'r !
" With various lustres these light up the world,
" Which death puts out, and darkens human race."

I grant, Lorenzo this indictment just :
The sage, peer, potentate, king, conqueror ! 465
Death humbles these ; more barb'rous Life the man !
Life is the triumph of our mould'ring clay ;
Death of the spirit infinite ! divine !
Death has no dread but what frail life imparts,
Nor life true joy but what kind death improves. 470
No bliss has life to boast, till death can give
Far greater. Life's a debtor to the grave ;
Dark lattice, letting in eternal day !

Lorenzo, blush at fondness for a life
Which sends celestial souls on errands vile, 475
To cater for the sense, and serve at boards
Where ev'ry ranger of the wilds, perhaps
Each reptile justly claims our upper-hand.
Luxurious feast ; a soul, a soul immortal,
In all the dainties of a brute bemir'd ! 480

Lorenzo, blush at terror for a death
Which gives thee to repose in festive bow'rs,
Where nectars sparkle, angels minister,
And more than angels share, and raise, and crown,
And eternize, the birth, bloom, bursts of bliss. 485
What need I more ? O Death, the palm is thine.

Then welcome, Death ! thy dreadful harbingers,
Age and disease ; Disease, tho' long my guest,
That plucks my nerves, those tender strings of life,
~~Which pluck'd a little more will toll the bell~~ 490
~~That calls my few friends to my funeral ;~~
Where feeble Nature drops, perhaps, a tear,
While Reason and Religion, better taught,
Congratulate the dead, and crown his tomb
With wrath triumphant. Death is victory ; 495
It binds in chains the raging ills of life :

Lust and Ambition, Wrath and Avarice,
 Dragg'd at his chariot-wheel, applaud his pow'r.
 That ill's corrosive, cares importunate,
 Are not immortal too, O Death, is thine. 500
 Our day of dissolution!—name it right;
 'Tis our great pay-day: 'tis our harvest, rich
 And ripe. What tho' the sickle, sometimes keen,
Just scars us as we reap the golden grain;
More than thy balm, O Gilead, heals the wound. 505
 Birth's feeble cry, and Death's deep dismal groan,
 Are slender tributes low-tax'd nature pays
 For mighty gain: the gain of each a life!
 But, O! the last the former so transcends,
 Life dies compar'd; Life lives beyond the grave. 510
 And feel I, Death, no joy from thought of thee?
 Death, the great counsellor, who man inspires
 With nobler thought and fairer deed!
 Death, the deliverer, who rescues man!
 Death, the rewarder, who the rescu'd crowns! 515
 Death, that absolves my birth, a curse without it!
 Rich Death, that realizes all my cares,
 Toils, virtues, hopes; without it a chimera!
 Death, of all pain the period, not of joy:
 Joy's source and subject still subsist unhurt: 520
 One in my soul, and one in her great fire,
 Tho' the four winds were warring for my dust.
 Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
 Tho' prison'd there, my dust too I reclaim,
 (To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres) 525
 And live entire. Death is the crown of life:
 Were death deny'd, poor man would live in vain:
 Were death deny'd, to live would not be life:
 Were death deny'd, ev'n fools would wish to die.
 Death wounds to cure; we fall, we rise, we reign! 530
 Spring from our fetters, fasten in the skies,
 Where blooming Eden withers in our sight.
 Death gives us more than was in Eden lost:
 This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
 When shall I die to vanity, pain, death? 535
 When shall I die?—when shall I live for ever?

End of Night the Third.

THE
COMPLAINT.

THE CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH;

containing

THE ONLY CURE FOR THE FEAR OF DEATH; AND
PROPER SENTIMENTS OF HEART ON THAT
INESTIMABLE BLESSING.

Inscribed to

THE HONOURABLE MR. YORKE.

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

A MUCH indebted muse, O Yorke, intrudes :
Amid the smiles of fortune and of youth,
Thine ear is patient of a serious song.
How deep implanted in the breast of man
The dread of death? I sing its sov'reign cure.
Why start at death? where is he? Death arriv'd,
Is past; not come, or gone; he's never here.
Ere hope, sensation fails; black-boding man
Receives, not suffers, Death's tremendous blow.

The

The knell, the shroud, the mattock, and the grave ; 10
 The deep damp vault, the darkness and the worm ;
 These are the bugbears of a winter's eve,
 The terrors of the living, not the dead ;
 Imagination's fool, and error's wretch,
 Man makes a death which Nature never made ; 15
 Then on the point of his own fancy falls,
 And feels a thousand deaths in fearing one.
 But were Death frightful, what has age to fear ?
 If prudent, age should meet the friendly foe,
 And shelter in his hospitable gloom. 20
 I scarce can meet a monument but holds
 My younger ; ev'ry date cries—" Come away."
 And what recalls me ? Look the world around,
 And tell me what. The wisest cannot tell.
 Should any born of woman give his thought 25
 Full range on just dislike's unbounded field ;
 Of things the vanity, of men the flaws,
 Flaws in the best ; the many flaw all o'er ;
 As leopards spotted, or as Ethiops dark ;
 Vivacious ill ; good dying immature ; 30
 (How immature Narcissa's marble tells)
 And at its death bequeathing endless pain ;
 His heart, tho' bold, would sicken at the sight,
 And spend itself in sighs for future scenes.
 But grant to life (and just it is to grant 35
 To lucky life) some perquisites of joy ;
 A time there is when, like a thrice-told tale,
 Long-rifled life of sweet can yield no more,
 But from our comment on the comedy,
 Pleasing reflections on parts well-sustain'd, 40
 Or purpos'd emendations where we fail'd,
 Or hopes of plaudits from our candid Judge
 When, on their exit, souls are bid unrobe,
 Toss fortune back her tinsel and her plume,
 And drop this mask of flesh behind the scene. 45
 With me that time is come ; my world is dead ;
 A new world rises, and new manners reign.
 Foreign comedians, a spruce band, arrive
 To push me from the scene, or hiss me there.

Whatt

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

47

What a pert race starts up ! the strangers gaze,
And I at them ; my neighbour is unknown ;
Nor that the worst. Ah me ! the dire effect
Of loit'ring here, of death defrauded long ;
Of old so gracious (and let that suffice)
My very master knows me not. ———

50

Shall I dare say peculiar is the fate ?
I've been so long remember'd, I'm forgot.
An object ever pressing dims the sight,
And hides behind its ardour to be seen.
When in his courtiers ears I pour my plaint,
They drink it as the nectar of the great,
And squeeze my hand, and beg me come to-morrow.
Refusal, canst thou wear a smother form ?

55

Indulge me, nor conceive I drop my theme.
Who cheapens life abates the fear of death.
Twice told the period spent on stubborn Troy,
Court-favour, yet untaken, I besiege ;
Ambition's ill-judg'd effort to be rich.
Alas ! ambition makes my little less,
Imbitt'ring the possess'd. Why wish for more ?
Wishing, of all employments is the worst ;
Philosophy's reverse, and health's decay !
Were I as plump as stall'd Theology,
Wishing would waste me to this shade again.
Were I as wealthy as a South-sea dream,
Wishing is an expedient to be poor.
Wishing, that constant hectic of a fool,
Caught at a court, purg'd off by purer air
And simpler diet, gifts of rural life !

65

70

75

Blest be that hand divine which gently laid
My heart at rest beneath this humble shed.
The world's a stately bark, on dang'rous seas
With pleasure seen, but boarded at our peril :
Here, on a single plank, thrown safe ashore,
I hear the tumult of the distant throng
As that of seas remote, or dying storms,
And meditate on scenes more silent still ;
Pursue my theme, and fight the fear of death.
Here, like a shepherd gazing from his hut,

80

85

Touching

Touching his reed, or leaning on his staff, 90
 Eager ambition's fiery chace I see;
 I see the circling hunt of noisy men
 Burst law's inclosure, leap the mounds of right,
 Pursuing, and pursu'd, each other's prey;
 As wolves for rapine, as the fox for wiles, 95
 Till Death, that mighty hunter, earths them all.
 Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?
 What tho' we wade in wealth, or soar in fame,
 Earth's highest station ends in, "here he lies;"
 And "dust to dust," concludes her noblest song, 100
 If this song lives, posterity shall know
 One, tho' in Britain born, with courtiers bred,
 Who thought e'en gold might come a day too late,
 Nor on his subtle death-bed plann'd his scheme
 For future vacancies in church or state, 105
 Some avocation deeming it—to die;
 Unbit by rage canine of dying rich;
 Guilt's blunder! and the loudest laugh of Hell.
 O my coevals! remnants of yourselves!
 Poor human ruins tott'ring o'er the grave; 110
 Shall we, shall aged men, like aged trees,
 Strike deeper their vile root, and closer cling,
 Still more enamour'd of this wretched soil?
 Shall our pale wither'd hands be still stretch'd out,
 Trembling, at once, with eagerness and age? 115
 With av'rice, and convulsions, grasping hard?
 Grasping at air! for what has earth beside?
 Man wants but little, nor that little long:
 How soon must he resign his very dust,
 Which frugal Nature lent him for an hour! 120
 Years inexperienc'd rush on num'rous ills:
 And soon as man, expert from time, has found
 The key of life, it opes the gates of death.
 When in this vale of years I backward look,
 And miss such numbers, numbers too, of such 125
 Firmer in health, and greener in their age,
 And stricter on their guard, and fitter far
 To play life's subtle game, I scarce believe
 I still survive. And am I fond of life,

Who

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

49

Who scarce can think it possible I live? 130

Alive by miracle! or, what is next,
 Alive by Mead! If I am still alive,
 Who long have bury'd what gives life to live,
 Firmness of nerve, and energy of thought,
 Life's lee is not more shallow than impure 135
 And vapid: Sense and Reason shew the door,
 Call for my bier, and point me to the dust.

O thou great Arbitrer of life and death!
 Nature's immortal, immaterial sun!
 Whose all-prolific beam late call'd me forth 140
 From darkness, teeming darkness, where I lay
 The worm's inferior; and, in rank, beneath
 The dust I tread on; high to bear my brow,
 To drink the spirit of the golden day,
 And triumph in existence, and couldst know 145
 No motive but my bliss, and hast ordain'd
 A rise in blessing! with the Patriarch's joy
 Thy call I follow to the land unknown:
 I trust in thee, and know in whom I trust:
 Or life or death is equal; neither weighs;
 All weight in this—O let me live to thee! 150

Tho' Nature's terrors, thus, may be repress'd,
 Still frowns grim Death; guilt points the tyrant's spear.
 And whence all human guilt? From death forgot.
 Ah me! too long I set at nought the swarm 155
 Of friendly warnings which around me flew,
 And smil'd unsmitten. Small my cause to smile!
 Death's admonitions, like shafts upward shot,
 More dreadful by delay, the longer ere
 They strike our hearts, the deeper is their wound. 160
 O think how deep, Lorenzo? here it stings;
 Who can appease its anguish? How it burns!
 What hand the barb'd, envenom'd thought can draw?
 What healing hand can pour the balm of peace,
 And turn my sight undaunted on the tomb? 165

With joy—with grief, that healing hand I see:
 Ah! too conspicuous! it is fix'd on high.
 On high?—what means my frenzy? I blaspheme:
 Alas! how low? how far beneath the skies?

D

The

The skies it form'd, and now it bleeds for me— 170
 But bleeds the balm I want—yet still it bleeds ;
 Draw the dire steel—ah, no ! the dreadful blessing, —
 What heart or can sustain or dares forego ?
 There hangs all human hope ; that nail supports
 The falling universe : that gone, we drop ; 175
 Horror receives us, and the dismal wist
 Creation had been smother'd in her birth—
 Darkneſs his curtain, and his bed the duſt,
 When ſtars and ſun are duſt beneath his throne,
 In heav'n itſelf can ſuch indulgence dwell ? 180
 O what a groan was there ! a groan not his :
 He ſeiz'd our dreadful right, the load ſuſtain'd,
 And heav'd the mountain from a guilty world.
 A thouſand worlds ſo bought, were bought too dear ;
 Sensations new in angels boſoms riſe, 185
 Suspend their ſong, and make a pauſe in bliſs.

O for their ſong to reach my lofty theme !
 Inſpire me, Night ! with all thy tuneful ſpheres,
 Much rather thou who doſt theſe ſpheres inſpire !
 Whiſt I with ſeraphs ſhare ſeraphic themes, 190
 And ſhew to men the dignity of man,
 Leſt I blaſpheme my ſubject with my ſong.
 Shall Pagan pages glow celeftial flame,
 And Chriſtian languish ? On our hearts, not heads,
 Falls the foul infamy. My heart, awake : 195
 What can awake thee, unawak'd by this,
 “ Expended Deity on human weal ? ”
 Feel the great truths which burſt the tenfold night
 Of Heathen error with a golden flood
 Of endleſs day. To feel is to be fir'd ; 200
 And to believe, Lorenzo, is to feel.

Thou moſt indulgent, moſt tremendous Pow'r !
 Still more tremendous for thy wond'rous love !
 That arms with awe more awful thy commands,
 And foul tranſgreſſion dips in ſeven-fold night ; 205
 How our hearts tremble at thy love immenſe !
 In love immenſe, inviolably juſt !
 Thou, rather than thy juſtice ſhould be ſtain'd,
 Didſt ſtain the croſs : and, work of wonders far

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

51

The greatest, that thy dearest far might bleed. 210

Bold thought ! shall I dare speak it or repress ?
Should man more execrate or boast the guilt

Which rous'd such vengeance ; which such love inflam'd ?

O'er guilt (how mountainous !) with outstretch'd arms

Stern Justice and soft smiling Love, embrace, 215

Supporting, in full majesty, thy throne,

When seem'd its majesty to need support,

Or that, or man, inevitably lost :

What but the fathomless of thought divine

Could labour such expedient from despair, 220

And rescue both ? Both rescue ! both exalt !

O how are both exalted by the deed !

The wond'rous deed ! or shall I call it more ?

A wonder in Omnipotence itself !

A mystery no less to gods than men ! 225

Not thus our infidels th'Eternal draw,

A God all o'er consummate, absolute,

Full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete :

They set at odds Heav'n's jarring attributes,

And, with one excellence, another wound ; 230

Maim Heav'n's perfection, break its equal beams,

Bid mercy triumph over—God himself,

Undeify'd by their opprobrious praise.

A God all mercy is a God unjust.

Ye brainless Wits ! ye baptiz'd Infidels ! 235

Ye worse for mending ! wash'd to fouler stains !

The ransom was paid down ; the fund of heav'n,

Heav'n's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,

Amazing and amaz'd, pour'd forth the price,

All price beyond : tho' curious to compute, 240

Archangels fail'd to cast the mighty sum :

Its value vast ungrasp'd by minds create,

For ever hides and glows in the Supreme.

And was the ransom paid ? It was ; and paid

(What can exalt the bounty more ?) for you 245

The sun beheld it—No, the shocking scene

Drove back his chariot : Midnight veil'd his face ;

Not such as this, not such as Nature makes :

A midnight Nature shudder'd to behold ;

A midnight new ! a dread eclipse (without
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown !
 Sun ! didst thou fly thy Maker's pain ? or start
 At that enormous load of human guilt
 Which bow'd his blessed head, o'erwhelm'd his cross,
 Made groan the centre, burst earth's marble womb
 With pangs, strange pangs ! deliver'd of her dead ?
 Hell howl'd ; and heav'n that hour let fall a tear ;
 Heav'n wept, that men might smile ! Heav'n bled that man
 Might never die ! —

And is devotion virtue ? 'Tis compell'd.
 What heart of stone but glows at thoughts like these ?
 Such contemplations mount us, and should mount
 The mind still higher, nor ever glance on man
 Unraptur'd, uninflam'd.—Where roll my thoughts
 To rest from wonders ? other wonders rise,
 And strike where'er they roll : my soul is caught :
 Heav'n's sov'reign blessings clust'ring from the cross,
 Rush on her in a throng, and close her round
 The pris'ner of amaze !—In his blest life
 I see the path, and in his death the price,
 And in his great ascent the proof supreme
 Of immortality.—And did he rise ?
 Hear, O ye Nations ! hear it, O ye Dead !
 He rose, he rose ! he burst the bars of death.
 Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates,
 And give the King of Glory to come in.
 Who is the King of Glory ? He who left
 His throne of glory for the pang of death.
 Lift up your hands, ye everlasting gates,
 And give the King of Glory to come in,
 Who is the King of Glory ? He who slew
 The rav'nous foe that gorg'd all human race !
 The King of Glory he, whose glory fill'd
 Heav'n with amazement at his love to man,
 And with divine complacency beheld
 Pow'rs most illumin'd wilder'd in the theme.

The theme, the joy, how then shall man sustain ?
 Oh, the burst gates ! crush'd sting ! demolish'd throne !
 Last gasp of vanquish'd death. Shout, earth and heav'n,

This

This sum of good to man ! whose nature then 290
 Took wing, and mounted with him from the tomb.
 Then, then, I rose ; then first humanity
 Triumphant past the crystal ports of light,
 (Stupendous guest !) and seiz'd eternal youth,
 Seiz'd in our name. E'er since 'tis blasphemous 295
 To call man mortal. Man's mortality
 Was then transferr'd to death ; and heav'n's duration
 Unalienably seal'd to this frail frame,
 This child of dust.—Man, all-immortal ! hail ;
 Hail, Heav'n, all lavish of strange gifts to man ! 300
 Thine all the glory, man's the boundless bliss.

Where am I wrapt by this triumphant theme,
 On Christian-joy's exulting wing, above
 Th'Aonian mount !—Alas ! small cause for joy !
 What if to pain immortal ? if extent 305
 Of being, to preclude a close of woe,
 Where, then, my boast of immortality ?
 I boast it still, tho' cover'd o'er with guilt :
 For guilt, not innocence, his life he pour'd ;
 'Tis guilt alone can justify his death ; 310
 Nor that, unless his death can justify
 Relenting guilt in Heav'n's indulgent sight.
 If, sick of folly, I relent, he writes
 My name in Heav'n with that inverted spear
 (A spear deep-dipt in blood !) which pier'd his side, 315
 And open'd there a font for all mankind,
 Who strive, who combat crimes, to drink and live :
 This, only this, subdues the fear of death.

And what is this ?—survey the wond'rous cure,
 And at each step let higher wonder rise ! 320
 " Pardon for infinite offence ! and pardon
 " Thro' means that speak its value infinite !
 " A pardon bought with blood ! with blood divine !
 " With blood divine of him I made my foe !
 " Persisted to provoke ! tho' woo'd and aw'd, 325
 " Blest and chastis'd, a flagrant rebel still !
 " A rebel, 'midst the thunders of his throne !
 " Nor I alone ! a rebel universe !
 " My species up in arms ! not one exempt

" Yet for the foulest of the soul he dies ; 330
 " Most joy'd for the redeem'd from deepest guilt !
 " As if our race were held of highest rank,
 " And Godhead dearer as more kind to man !"
 Bound ev'ry heart ! and ev'ry bosom burn !

O what a scale of miracles is here ! 335
 Its lowest round high planted on the skies ;
 Its tow'ring summit lost beyond the thought
 Of man or angel ! Oh ! that I could climb
 The wonderful ascent with equal praise !
 Praise ! flow for ever (if astonishment 340
 Will give thee leave) my praise ! for ever flow :
 Praise ardent, cordial, constant, to high heav'n
 More fragrant than Arabia sacrific'd,
 And all her spicy mountains in a flame.

So dear, so due to Heav'n, shall praise descend 345
 With her soft plume (from plausible angels wing
 First pluck'd by man) to tickle mortal ears,
 Thus diving in the pockets of the great ?
 Is praise the perquisite of ev'ry paw,
 Tho' black as hell, that grapples well for gold ? 350

— Oh ! love of gold, thou meanest of amours ! —
 Shall praise her odours waste on virtues dead ;
 Embalm the base, perfume the stench of guilt,
 Earn dirty bread by washing Ethiops fair ;
 Removing filth, or sinking it from sight, 355
 A scavenger in scenes where vacant posts,
 Like gibbets yet untenanted, expect
 Their future ornaments ? From courts and thrones
 Return, apostate Praise ! thou vagabond !
 Thou prostitute ! to thy first love return ; 360
 Thy first, thy greatest, once unrivall'd theme.

There flow redundant, like Meander flow,
 Back to thy fountain, to that parent pow'r
 Who gives the tongue to sound, the thought to soar,
 The soul to be. Men homage pay to men. 365
 Thoughtless beneath whose dreadful eye they bow,
 In mutual awe profound, of clay to clay,
 Of guilt to guilt, and turn their backs on thee,
 Great Sire ! whom thrones celestial ceaseless sing,

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

55

To prostrate angels an amazing scene ! 370
 O the presumption of man's awe for man !—
 Man's Author, End, Restorer, Law, and Judge !
 Thine, all ; day thine, and thine this gloom of night,
 With all her wealth, with all her radiant worlds.
 What night eternal but a frown from thee ? 375
 What heav'n's meridian glory but thy smile ?
 And shall not praise be thine, not human praise,
 While heav'n's high host on hallelujahs live ?
 O may I breathe no longer than I breathe
 My soul in praise to HIM who gave my soul, 380
 And all her infinite of prospect fair,
 Cut thro' the shades of hell, great Love ! by thee,
 Oh, most adorable ! most unador'd !
 Where shall that praise begin which ne'er should end ?
 Where'er I turn, what claim on all applause ! 385
 How is Night's sable mantle labour'd o'er,
 How richly wrought with attributes divine !
 What wisdom shines ! what love ! This midnight pomp,
 This gorgeous arch, with golden worlds inlaid !
 Built with divine ambition ! nought to thee ; 390
 For others this profusion. Thou, apart,
 Above, beyond, Oh ! tell me mighty Mind,
 Where art thou ? shall I dive into the deep ?
 Call to the sun ? or ask the roaring winds
 For their Creator ? Shall I question loud 395
 The thunder, if in that th' Almighty dwells ?
 Or holds HE furious storms in streighten'd reins,
 And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel his rapid car ?
 What mean these questions ?—Trembling I retract ;
 My prostrate soul adores the present God, 400
 Praise I a distant Deity ? He tunes
 My voice (if tun'd ;) the nerve that writes sustains :
 Wrapp'd in his being I resound his praise :
 But tho' past all diffus'd, without a shore
 His essence, local is His throne (as meet) 405
 To gather the dispers'd (as standards call
 The lifted from afar) to fix a point,
 A central point, collective of His sons,
 Since finite ev'ry nature but his own.

The nameless HE, whose nod is Nature's birth, 410
 And Nature's shield the shadow of His hand ;
 Her dissolution His suspended smile !
 The great First-Last ! pavilion'd high he sits.
 In darkness from excessive splendor, borne,
 By gods unseen, unless thro' lustre lost. 415
 His glory, to created glory, bright
 As that to central horrors : he looks down
 On all that soars, and spans immensity.

Tho' night unnumber'd worlds unfolds to view,
 Boundless Creation ! what art Thou ? A beam, 420
 A mere effluvium of his majesty.
 And shall an atom of this atom-world
 Mutter, in dole and sin, the theme of heav'n !
 Down to the centre should I send my thought
 Thro' beds of glitt'ring ore and glowing gems, 425
 Their beggar'd blaze wants lustre for my lay ;
 Goes out in darkness : if, on tow'ring wing,
 I send it thro' the boundless vault of stars,
 (The stars, tho' rich, what dross their gold to Thee,
 Great, good, wise, wonderful, eternal King !)
 If to those conscious stars thy throne around, 430
 Praise ever-pouring, and imbibing bliss,
 And ask their strain ; they want it, more they want,
 Poor their abundance, humble their sublime,
 Languid their energy, their ardour cold ; 435
 Indebted still, their highest rapture burns,
 Short of its mark, defective, tho' divine.

Still more—this theme is man's, and man's alone ;
 Their vast appointments reach it not ; they see
 On earth a bounty not indulg'd on high, 440
 And downward look for heav'n's superior praise !
 First-born of Ether ! high in fields of light !
 View man, to see the glory of your God !
 Could angels envy, they had envy'd here :
 And some did envy ; and the rest, tho' gods, 445
 Yet still gods unredeem'd there triumphs man,
 Tempted to weigh the dust against the skies)
 They less would feel, tho' more adore my theme.
 They sung creation (for in that they shar'd)

How

How rose in melody the child of Love ! 450
 Creation's great superior, man ! is thine ;
 Thine is Redemption ; they just gave the key ;
 'Tis thine to raise and eternize the song,
 Tho' human, yet divine ; for should not this
 Raise man o'er man, and kindle seraphs here ? 455
 Redemption ! 'twas creation more sublime ;
 Redemption ! 'twas the labour of the skies :
 Far more than labour—it was death in heav'n.
 A truth so strange, 'twere bold to think it true,
 If not far bolder still to disbelieve. 460

Here pause and ponder. Was there death in heav'n ?
 What then on earth ? on earth, which struck the blow ?
 Who struck it ? Who ?—O how is man enlarg'd,
 Seen thro' this medium : How the pigmy tow'rs !
 How counterpois'd his origin from dust ! 465
 How counterpois'd to dust his sad return !
 How voided his vast distance from the skies !
 How near he presses on the seraph's wing !
 Which is the seraph ? which the born of clay ?
 How this demonstrates, thro' the thickest cloud 470
 Of guilt and clay condens'd, the Son of Heav'n !
 The double Son : the made and the remade !
 And shall Heav'n's double property be lost ?
 Man's double madness only can destroy.
 To man the bleeding Cross has promis'd all ; 475
 The bleeding Cross has sworn eternal grace.
 Who gave his life, what grace shall he deny ?
 O ye, who from this rock of ages leap,
 Disdainful, plunging headlong in the deep !
 What cordial joy, what consolation strong, 480
 Whatever winds arise, or billows roll,
 Our int'rest in the Master of the storm !
 Cling there, and in wreck'd Nature's ruin smile,
 While vile apostates tremble in a calm.

Man, know thyself : all wisdom centres there. 485
 To none man seems ignoble but to man.
 Angels that grandeur, men o'erlook, admire :
 How long shall human nature be their book,
 Degen'rate mortal, and unread by thee ?

The beam dim reason sheds, shews wonders there; 490
 What high contents ! illustrious faculties !
 But the grand comment, which displays at full
 Our human height, scarce sever'd from divine,
 By Heav'n compos'd, was publish'd on the Cross,
 Who looks on that, and sees not in himself 495
 An awful stranger, a terrestrial God ?
 A glorious partner with the Deity
 In that high attribute, immortal life ?
 If a God bleeds, he bleeds not for a worm,
 I gaze, and as I gaze my mountain soul 500
 Catches strange fire, Eternity ! at thee,
 And drops the world—or, rather, more enjoys.
 How chang'd the face of Nature ! how improv'd !
 What seem'd a chaos, shines a glorious world,
 Or what a world an Eden ! heighten'd all ! 505
 It is another scene ! another self !
 And still another, as time rolls along,
 And that a self far more illustrious still.
 Beyond long ages, yet roll'd up in shades
 Unpierc'd by bold conjecture's keenest ray, 510
 What evolutions of surprising fate !
 How Nature opens, and receives my soul
 In boundless walks of raptur'd thought ! where gods
 Encounter and embrace me ! What new births
 Of strange adventure, foreign to the sun ; 515
 Where what now charms, perhaps whate'er exists,
 Old time, and fair creation, are forgot !
 Is this extravagant ? Of man we form
 Extravagant conception to be just :
 Conception unconfin'd wants wings to reach him : 520
 Beyond its reach the Godhead only more.
 He the great Father ! kindled at one flame
 The world of rationals ; one spirit pour'd
 From spirit's awful fountain ; pour'd himself
 Thro' all their souls, but not an equal stream, 525
 Profuse, or frugal, of th'inspiring God,
 As his wise plan demanded ; and when past
 Their various trials, in their various spheres,
 If they continue rational, as made,

Reforbs them all into himself again, 530
His throne their centre, and his smile their crown.

Why doubt we, then, the glorious truth to sing,
Tho' yet unsung, as deem'd, perhaps, too bold?

Angels are men of a superior kind;

Angels are men in lighter habit clad, 535

High o'er celestial mountains wing'd in flight;

And men are angels, loaded for an hour,

Who wade this miry vale, and climb with pain,

And slipp'ry step, the bottom of the steep.

Angels their failings, mortals have their praise: 540

While here, of corps ethereal, such enroll'd,

And summon'd to the glorious standard soon,

Which flames eternal crimson thro' the skies;

Nor are our brothers thoughtless of their kin,

Yet absent; but not absent from their love. 545

Michael has fought our battles; Raphael sung

Our triumphs; Gabriel on our errands flown,

Sent by the SOV'REIGN: and are these, O man,

Thy friends, thy warm allies! and thou (shame burn

The cheek to cinder!) rival to the brute? 550

Religion's all. Descending from the skies

To wretched man, the goddess in her left

Holds out this world, and in her right the next.

Religion! the sole voucher man is man;

Supporter sole of man above himself; 555

Ev'n in this night of frailty, change, and death,

She gives the soul a soul that acts a god.

Religion! Providence! an after-state!

Here his firm footing; here his solid rock;

This can support us; all is sea besides. 560

Sinks under us; belforms, and then devours.

His hand the good man fastens on the skies,

And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

As when a wretch, from thick polluted air,

Darkness and stench, and suffocating damps, 565

And dungeon horrors, by kind fate discharg'd,

Climbs some fair eminence, where ether pure

Surrounds him, and Elysian prospects rise,

His heart exults, his spirits cast their load,

As if new-born he triumphs in the change ; 570
 So joys the soul, when from inglorious aims
 And sordid sweets, from feculence and froth
 Of ties terrestrial set at large, she mounts
 To Reason's region, her own element,
 Breathes hopes immortal, and affects the skies. 575

Religion ! thou the soul of happiness,
 And, groaning Calvary, of thee ! there shine
 The noblest truths ; there strongest motives sting ;
 There sacred violence assaults the soul ;
 There nothing but compulsion is forborn. 580
 Can love allure us ? or can terror awe ?
 He weeps !—the falling drop puts out the sun.
 He sighs !—the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes.
 If in his love so terrible, what then
 His wrath inflam'd ? His tenderness on fire ; 585
 Like soft smooth oil, out blazing other fires ?
 Can pray'r, can praise, avert it ?—Thou, my all !
 My theme ! my inspiration ! and my crown !
 My strength in age ! my rise in low estate !
 My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth !—my world ! 590
 My light in darkness ! and my life in death :
 My boast thro' time ! bliss thro' eternity !
 Eternity, too short to speak thy praise,
 Or fathom thy profound of love to man !
 To man of men the meanest, ev'n to me ; 595
 My sacrifice ! my God !—what things are these !

What then art thou ? By what name shall I call thee ?
 Knew I the name devout archangels use,
 Devout archangels should the name enjoy,
 By me unrival'd ; thousands more sublime, 600
 None half so dear as that which, tho' unspoke,
 Still glows at heart. O how Omnipotence
 Is lost in love ! thou great **PHILANTHROPIST** !
 Father of angels ! but the friend of man !
 Like Jacob, fondest of the younger born ! 605
 Thou who didst save him, snatch the smoking brand
 From out the flames, and quench it in thy blood !
 How art thou pleas'd by bounty to distress !
 To make us groan beneath our gratitude,

Too.

Too big for birth ! to favour and confound ; 610
 To challenge, and to distance all return !
 Of lavish love stupendous heights to soar,
 And leave praise panting in the distant vale !
 Thy right too great defrauds thee of thy due,
 And sacrilegious our sublimest song. 615
 But since the naked will obtains thy smile,
 Beneath this monument of praise unpaid,
 And future life symphonious to my strain,
 (That noblest hymn to heav'n !) for ever lie
 Intomb'd my fear of death ! and ev'ry fear, 620
 The dread of ev'ry evil but thy frown.

Whom see I yonder so demurely smile ?
 Laughter a labour, and might break their rest.
 Ye Quietists, in homage to the skies !
 Serene ! of soft address ! who mildly make 625
 An unobtrusive tender of your hearts,
 Abhorring violence ! who halt indeed ;
 But, for the blessing, wrestle not with Heav'n !
 Think you my song too turbulent ? too warm ?
 Are passions, then, the pagans of the soul ? 630
 Reason alone baptiz'd ! alone ordain'd
 To touch things sacred ? Oh ! for warmer still !
 Guilt chills my zeal, and age benumbs my pow'rs :
 Oh ! for an humbler heart and prouder song !
 THOU, my much-injur'd theme ! with that soft eye 635
 Which melted o'er doom'd Salem, deign to look
 Compassion to the coldness of my breast,
 And pardon to the winter in my strain.

Oh ! ye cold-hearted, frozen, Formalists !
 On such a theme 'tis impious to be calm. 640
 Passion is reason, transport temper, here.
 Shall Heav'n, which gave us ardour, and has shewn
 Her own for man so strongly, not disdain
 What smooth emollients in theology,
 Recumbent Virtue's downy doctors preach, 645
 That prose of piety, a lukewarm praise ?
 Rise odours sweet from incense uninflam'd ?
 Devotion when lukewarm is undevout ;
 But when it glows, its heat is struck to Heav'n ;

To

To human hearts her golden harps are stung ; 650
High Heav'n's orchestra chaunts *amen* to man.

Hear I, or dream I hear, their distant strain,
Sweet to the soul, and tasting strong of Heav'n,
Soft wafted on celestial Pity's plume,
Thro' the vast spaces of the universe, 655
To cheer me in this melancholy gloom ?

Oh ! when will death (now stinglefs) like a friend
Admit me of their choir ? Oh ! when will death
This mould'ring, old, partition-wall throw down !
Give beings, one in nature, one abode ? 660

Oh ! Death divine ! that giv'st us to the skies !
Great future ! glorious patron of the past
And present, when shall I thy shrine adore ?
From Nature's continent, immensely wide,
Immensely blest, this little isle of life, 665
This dark incarcerating colony

Divides us. Happy day that breaks our chain !
That manumits ; that calls from exile home ;
That leads to Nature's great metropolis,
And readmits us thro' the guardian hand 670
Of elder brothers, to our Father's throne,
Who hears our Advocate, and thro' his wounds
Beholding man, allows that tender name.

'Tis this makes Christian triumph a command ;
'Tis this makes joy a duty to the wife. 675
'Tis impious in a good man to be sad.

Seest thou, Lorenzo, where hangs all our hope ?
Touch'd by the Cross we live, or more than die ;
That touch which touch'd not angels ; more divine
Than that which touch'd confusion into form, 680
And darkness into glory : partial touch !
Ineffably pre-eminent regard !
Sacred to man, and sov'reign thro' the whole
Long golden chain of miracles, which hangs
From Heav'n thro' all duration, and supports, 685
In one illustrious and amazing plan,
Thy welfare, Nature, and thy God's renown.
That touch, with charm celestial, heals the soul
Diseas'd, drives pain from guilt, lights life in death,

Turns.

Turns earth to Heav'n, to heav'nly thrones transforms 690
The ghastly ruins of the mould'ring tomb.

Dost ask me when? When He who dy'd returns;
Returns, how chang'd! where then the man of woe?
In glory's terrors all the Godhead burns,
And all his courts, exhausted by the tide 695
Of deities triumphant in his train,

Leave a stupendous solitude in Heav'n:
Replenish'd soon, replenish'd with increase
Of pomp and multitude; a radiant band
Of angels new, of angels from the tomb. 700

Is this by fancy thrown remote? and rise
Dark doubts between the promise and event?
I send thee not to volumes for thy cure;
Read nature; nature is a friend to truth;
Nature is Christian; preaches to mankind, 705
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.

Hast thou ne'er seen the comet's flaming flight?
Th'illustrious stranger passing, terror sheds
On gazing nations from his fiery train,
Of length enormous, takes his ample round 710
Thro' depths of ether; coasts unnumber'd worlds

Of more than solar glory; doubles wide
Heav'n's mighty cape; and then revisits earth,
From the long travel of a thousand years.
Thus at the destin'd period shall return 715
He, once on earth, who bids the comet blaze,

And with him all our triumph o'er the tomb.

Nature is dumb on this important point,
Or Hope precarious in low whisper breathes:
Faith speaks aloud, distinct; ev'n adders hear, 720
But turn, and dart into the dark again.
Faith builds a bridge a bridge across the gulph of death,
To break the shock blind Nature cannot shun,
And lands Thought smoothly on the farther shore.

Death's terror is the mountain faith removes, 725
That mountain-barrier between man and peace.
'Tis Faith disarms Destruction, and absolves

From ev'ry clam'rous charge the guiltless tomb,

Why disbelieve? Lorenzo!—Reason bids; 730
"All

"All-sacred Reason."—Hold her sacred still ;
 Nor shalt thou want a rival in thy frame :
 All-sacred Reason ! source and soul of all
 Demanding praise on earth, or earth above !
 My heart is thine : deep in its inmost folds
 Live thou with life ; live dearer of the two.
 Wear I the blessed Cross, by Fortune-stamp'd
 On passive Nature before Thought was born ?
 My birth's blind bigot ! fir'd with local zeal !
 No ; Reason rebaptiz'd me when adult ;
 Weigh'd true and false in her impartial scale ;
 My heart became the convert of my head,
 And made that choice which once was but my fate.

730

735

740

"On argument alone my faith is built."
 Reason pursu'd his faith ; and unpursu'd,
 Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more :
 And such our proof, that er our faith is right,
 Or reason lies, and Heav'n design'd it wrong.
 Absolve we this ? what then is blasphemy ?
 Fond as we are ; and justly fond of faith,
 Reason, we grant, demands our first regard ;
 The mother honour'd, as the daughter dear.
 Reason the root, fair Faith is but the flow'r :
 The fading flow'r shall die, but reason lives
 Immortal, as her Father in the skies,
 When faith is virtue, reason makes it so.

745

750

755

Wrong not the Christian ; think not reason your's ;
 'Tis reason our great Master holds so dear ;
 'Tis reason's injur'd rights his wrath resents ;
 'Tis reason's voice obey'd, his glories crown :
 To give lost reason life, he pour'd his own.
 Believe, and shew the reason of a man ;
 Believe, and taste the pleasure of a God ;
 Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.
 Thro' reason's wounds alone thy faith can die ;
 Which dying, tenfold terror gives to death,
 And dips in venom his twice-mortal sting.

760

765

Learn hence what honours, what loud pæans, due
 To those who push our antidote aside ;
 Those boasted friends to reason and to man,

Whole

NIGHT THE FOURTH.

65

Whose fatal love stabs ev'ry joy, and leaves 770
Death's terror heighten'd gnawing on his heart.

These pompous sons of reason idoliz'd,
And vilify'd at once ; of reason dead,
Then deify'd, as monarchs were of old ;
What conduct plants proud laurels on their brow ? 775

While love of truth thro' all their camp resounds,
They draw Pride's curtain o'er the noontide ray,
Spike up their inch of reason on the point
Of philosophic wit, call'd argument,
And then exulting in their taper, cry, 780

" Behold the sun ; " and, Indian-like, adore.

Talk they of morals ? O thou bleeding Love !

Thou Maker of new morals to mankind !

The grand morality is love of Thee.

As wise as Socrates, if such they were, 785

(Nor will they 'bate of that sublime renown)

As wise as Socrates might justly stand

The definition of a modern fool.

A Christian is the highest style of man.

And is there who the blessed Cross wipes off, 790

As a foul blot, from his dishonour'd brow ?

If angels tremble, 'tis at such a sight :

The wretch they quit, desponding of their charge,

More struck with grief or wonder who can tell ?

Ye sold to sense ! ye citizens of earth ! 795

(For such alone the Christian banner fly)

Know ye how wise your choice, how great your gain ?

Behold the picture of earth's happiest man :

" He calls his wish, it comes ; he sends it back,

" And says he call'd another ; that arrives, 800

" Meets the same welcome ; yet he still calls on ;

" Till one calls him, who varies not his call,

" But holds him fast, in chains of darkness bound,

" Till nature dies, and judgment sets him free ;

" A freedom far less welcome than his chain." 805

But grant man happy ; grant him happy long ;

Add to life's highest prize her latest hour ;

That hour, so late, is nimble in approach,

That, like a post, comes on in full career.

How

How swift the shuttle flies that weaves thy shroud ! 810
 Where is the fable of thy former years ?
 Thrown down the gulf of time ; as far from thee
 As they had ne'er been thine ; the day in hand,
 Like a bird struggling to get loose, is going !
 Scarce now possess'd, so suddenly 'tis gone ; 815
 And each swift moment fled, is death advanc'd
 By strides as swift. Eternity is all ;
 And whose eternity ? who triumphs there ?
 Bathing for ever in the font of bliss !
 For ever basking in the Deity ! 820
 Lorenzo, who ? thy conscience shall reply.
 O give it leave to speak ; 'twill speak ere long,
 Thy leave unask'd : Lorenzo, hear it now,
 While useful its advice, its accent mild.
 By the great edict, the divine decree, 825
 Truth is deposited with man's last hour ;
 An honest hour, and faithful to her trust ;
 Truth ! eldest daughter of the Deity !
 Truth of his council when he made the worlds ;
 Nor less, when he shall judge the worlds he made ; 830
 Tho' silent long, and sleeping ne'er so sound,
 Smother'd with errors, and oppress'd with toys,
 That heav'n commission'd hour no sooner calls,
 But from her cavern in the soul's abyts,
 Like him they fable under Ætna whelm'd, 835
 The goddess bursts in thunder and in flame,
 Loudly convinces, and severely pains.
 Dark dæmons I discharge, and hydra-stings ;
 The keen vibration of bright truth—is hell ;
 Just definition ! tho' by schools untaught. 840
Ye deaf to truth, peruse this parson'd page,
 And trust, for once, a prophet and a priest :
 “ Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.”

End of Night the Fourth.

THE
COMPLAINT.

THE RELAPSE.

Inscribed to the Right Honourable
THE EARL OF LITCHFIELD.

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

LORENZO, to recriminate is just.
Fondness of fame is avarice of air.
I grant the man is vain who writes for praise,
Praise no man e'er deserv'd, who sought no more.
As just thy second charge. I grant the muse
Has often blush'd at her degen'rate sons,
Retain'd by sense to plead her filthy cause,
To raise the low, to magnify the mean,
And subtilize the gross into refin'd ;
As if to magic numbers pow'rful charm
'Twas giv'n to make a civet of their song
Obscene, and sweeten ordure to perfume.
Wit, a true Pagan, deifies the brute,
And lifts our swine enjoyments from the mire.

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5
10
The

The fact notorious, nor obscure the cause
 We wear the chains of pleasure and of pride :
 These share the man, and these distract him too ;
 Draw diff'rent ways, and clash in their commands.
 Pride, like an eagle, builds among the stars ;
 But Pleasure, lark-like, nests upon the ground.
 Joys shar'd by brute creation Pride resents ;
 Pleasure embraces : man would both enjoy,
 And both at once : a point how hard to gain !
 But what can't Wit, when stung by strong desire ?
 Wit dares attempt this arduous enterprize.
 Since joys of sense can't rise to Reason's taste,
 In subtle Sophistry's laborious forge,
 Wit hammers out a reason new, that stoops
 To sordid scenes, and meets them with applause.
 Wit calls the Graces the chaste zone to loose ;
 Nor less then a plump god to fill the bowl :
 A thousand phantoms and a thousand spells,
 A thousand opiates scatters to delude,
 To fascinate, inebriate, lay asleep,
 And the fool'd mind of man delightfully confound.
 Thus that which shock'd the judgment shocks no more ;
 That which gave Pride offence no more offends.
 Pleasure and Pride, by nature mortal foes,
 At war eternal which in man shall reign,
 By Wit's address patch up a fatal peace,
 And hand in hand lead on the rank debauch,
 From rank, refin'd to delicate and gay.
 Art, cursed Art ! wipes off th'indebted blush
 From Nature's cheek, and bronzes ev'ry shame.
 Man smiles in ruin, glories in his guilt,
 And infamy stands candidate for praise.
 All writ by man in favour of the soul,
 These sensual ethics far, in bulk, transcend.
 The flow'rs of eloquence, profusely pour'd
 O'er spotted Vice, fill half the letter'd world.
 Can pow'rs of genius exercise their page,
 And consecrate enormities with song !
 But let not these inexpiable strains
 Condemn the muse that knows her dignity,

13

20

25

30

35

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45

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Nor

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

69

Nor meanly stops at time, but holds the world . . . 55

As 'tis, in Nature's ample field, a point,

A point in her esteem ; from whence to start,

And run the round of universal space,

To visit being universal there,

And being's source, that utmost flight of mind ! 60

Yet spite of this so vast circumference,

Well knows but what is moral, nought is great.

Sing Syrens only ? do not angels sing ?

There is in Poesy a decent pride,

Which well becomes her when she speaks to Prose, 65

Her younger sister, haply not more wise.

Think'tt thou, Lorenzo, to find pastimes here ?

No guilty passion blown into a flame,

No foible flatter'd, dignity disgrac'd,

No fairy field of fiction, all on flow'r, 70

No rainbow colours here, or silken tale ;

But solemn counsels, images of awe,

Truths which Eternity lets fall on man,

With double weight, thro' these revolving spheres,

This death-deep silence, and incumbent shade ; 75

Thoughts such as shall revisit your last hour,

Visit uncall'd, and live when life expires ;

And thy dark pencil, Midnight ! darker still

In melancholy dipp'd, embrowns the whole.

Yet this, even this, my laughter-loving friends ! 80

Lorenzo ! and thy brothers of the smile !

If what imports you most can most engage,

Shall steal your ear, and chain you to my song.

Or if you fail me, know the wise shall taste

The truths I sing ; the truths I sing shall feel, 85

And, feeling, give assent ; and their assent

Is ample recompence ; is more than praise.

But chiefly thine, O Litchfield ! nor mistake ;

Think not un introduc'd I force my way :

Narcissa, not unknown, not unally'd 90

By virtue, or by blood, illustrious Youth !

To thee, from blooming Amaranthine bow'rs,

Where all the language Harmony, descends

Uncall'd, and asks admittance for the muse :

A

A muse that will not pain thee with thy praise :
Thy praise she drops, by nobler still inspir'd.

95

O thou, blest Spirit ; whether the supreme,
Great antemundane Father ! in whose breast
Embryo creation, unborn being, dwelt
And all its various revolutions roll'd
Present, tho' future, prior to themselves ;
Whose breath can blow it into nought again,
Or from his throne some delegated pow'r,
Who, studious of our peace, dost turn the thought
From vain and vile to solid and sublime !
Unseen thou lead'st me to delicious draughts
Of inspiration, from a purer stream,
And fuller of the God than that which burst
From fam'd Castalia ; nor is yet allay'd
My sacred thirst, tho' long my soul has rang'd
Thro' pleasing paths of moral and divine,
By thee sustain'd, and lighted by the stars.

100

105

110

By them best lighted are the paths of thought ;
Nights are their days, their most illumin'd hours.
By day the soul, o'erborne by life's career,
Stunn'd by the din, and giddy with the glare,
Reels far from reason, jostled by the throng.
By day the soul is passive, all her thoughts
Impos'd, precarious, broken, ere mature.
By night, from objects free, from passion cool,
Thoughts uncontroul'd, and unimpres'd, the births
Of pure election, arbitrary range,
Not to the limits of one world confin'd,
But from ethereal travels light on earth,
As voyagers drop anchor for repose.

115

120

125

Let Indians, and the gay, like Indians, fond
Of feather'd fopperies, the sun adore ;
Darkness has more divinity for me ;
It strikes thought inward ; it drives back the soul
To settle on herself, our point supreme !
There lies our theatre ; there sits our judge.
Darkness the curtain drops o'er life's dull scene ;
'Tis the kind hand of Providence stretcht out
'Twixt man and vanity ; 'tis Reason's reign,

130

And

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

71

And Virtue's too ; these tutelary shades
Are man's asylum from the tainted throng.
Night is the good man's friend, and guardian too ;
It no less rescues virtue than inspires.

135

Virtue, for ever frail as fair, below,
Her tender nature suffers in the crowd,
Nor touches on the world without a stain.
The world's infectious ; few bring back at eve,
Immaculate, the manners of the morn.
Something we thought is blotted ; we resolv'd,
Is shaken ; we renounc'd, returns again.
Each salutation may slide in a sin
Unthought before, or fix a former flaw.
Nor is it strange ; light, motion, concourse, noise,
All scatter us abroad. Thought, outward-bound,
Neglectful of our home-affairs, flies off
In fume and dissipation, quits her charge,
And leaves the breast unguarded to the foe.

140

145

150

Present example gets within our guard,
And acts with double force, by few repell'd ;
Ambition fires ambition ; love of gain
Strikes, like a pestilence, from breast to breast :
Riot, pride, perfidy, blue vapours, breathe,
And inhumanity is caught from man,
From smiling man ! A slight, a single glance,
And shot at random, often has brought home
A sudden fever to the throbbing heart
Of envy, rancour, or impure desire.

155

160

We see, we hear, with peril ; Safety dwells
Remote from multitude. The world's a school
Of wrong, and what proficients swarm around !
We must or imitate or disapprove ;
Must list as their accomplices or foes :
That stains our innocence, this wounds our peace.
From Nature's birth, hence, Wisdom has been smit
With sweet recess, and languish'd for the shade.

165

170

This sacred shade and solitude what is it ?
'Tis the felt presence of the Deity.
Few are the faults we flatter when alone ;
Vice sinks in her allurements, is ungilt,

And looks, like other objects, black by night. 175
 By night an atheist half believes a God.
 Night is fair Virtue's immemorial friend.
 The conscious moon, thro' ev'ry distant age,
 Has held a lamp to Wisdom, and let fall,
 On contemplation's eye her purging ray. 180
 The fam'd Athenian, he who woo'd from Heav'n
 Philosophy the fair, to dwell with men,
 And form their manners, not inflame their pride,
 While o'er his head, as fearful to molest
 His lab'ring mind, the stars in silence slide, 185
 And seem all gazing on their future guest,
 See him soliciting his ardent suit
 In private audience : all the live-long night,
 Rigid in thought, and motionless he stands,
 Nor quits his theme or posture till the sun 190
 (Rude drunkard ! rising rosy from the main)
 Disturbs his nobler intellectual beam,
 And gives him to the tumult of the world.
 Hail, precious moments ! stol'n from the black waste
 Of murder'd time ! auspicious Midnight ! hail ! 195
 The world excluded, ev'ry passion hush'd,
 And open'd a calm intercourse with Heav'n,
 Here the soul sits in council, ponders past,
 Predestines future action ; sees, not feels,
 Tumultous life, and reasons with the storm ; 200
 All her lies answers, and thinks down her charms.
 What awful joy ! what mental liberty !
 I am not pent in darkness ; rather say
 (If not too bold) in darkness I'm imbower'd.
 Delightful gloom ! the clust'ring thoughts around 205
 Spontaneous rise, and blossom in the shade,
 But droop by day, and sicken in the sun.
 Thought borrows light elsewhere ; from that first fire,
 Fountain of animation ! whence descends
 Urania, my celestial guest ! who deigns 210
 Nightly to visit me, so mean ! and now,
 Conscious how needful discipline to man,
 From pleasing dalliance with the charms of night,
 My wand'ring thought recalls, to what excites

Far

Far other beat of heart, Narcissa's tomb.

215

Or is it feeble Nature calls me back,
And breaks my spirit into grief again?
Is it a Stygian vapour in my blood?

A cold slow puddle creeping thro' my veins?

Or is it thus with all men?—Thus with all.

220

What are we! how unequal! now we soar,
And now we sink. To be the same transcends
Our present prowess. Dearly pays the soul
For lodging ill; too dearly rents her clay.

Reason, a baffled counsellor! but adds

225

The blush of weakness to the bane of woe.

The noblest spirit, fighting her hard fate

In this damp, dusky region, charg'd with storms,

But feebly flutters, yet untaught to fly;

Or, flying, short her flight, and sure her fall:

230

Our utmost strength, when down, to rise again,

And not to yield, tho' beaten, all our praise.

'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man.

Tho' proud in promise, big in previous thought,

Experience damps our triumph. I, who late

235

Emerging from the shadows of the grave,

Where grief detain'd me pris'ner, mounting high,

Threw wide the gates of everlasting day,

And call'd mankind to glory, shook off pain,

Mortality shook off, in ether pure,

240

And struck the stars, now feel my spirits fail;

They drop me from the zenith; down I rush,

Like him whom fable fledg'd with waxen wings,

In sorrow drown'd—but not in sorrow lost.

How wretched is the man who never mourn'd!

245

I dive for precious pearl in sorrow's stream:

Not so the thoughtless man that only grieves,

Takes all the torment, and rejects the gain.

(Inestimable gain!) and gives Heav'n leave

To make him but more wretched, not more wise.

250

If wisdom is our lesson (and what else

Ennobles man? what else have angels learn'd?)

Grief! more proficients in thy school are made,

Than genius or proud learning e'er could boast.

Varacious learning, often over-fed, 255
 Digests not into sense her motley meal.
 This bookcase, with dark booty almost burst,
 This forager on other's wisdom, leaves
 Her native farm, her reason, quite untill'd.
 With mixt manure she surfeits the rank soil, 260
 Dung'd, but not dress'd, and rich to beggary :
 A pomp untameable of weeds prevails :
 Her servants wealth incumber'd Wisdom mourns.
 And what says Genius ? ' Let the dull be wise.'
 Genius ; too hard for right, can prove it wrong, 265
 And loves to boast, where blush men less inspir'd.
 It pleads exemption from the laws of sense,
 Considers reason as a leveller,
 And scorns to share a blessing with the crowd.
 That wise it could be, thinks an ample claim 270
 To glory, and to pleasure gives the rest.
 Crassus but sleeps, Ardelio is undone.
 Wisdom less shudders at a fool than wit.
 But wisdom smiles when humbled mortals weep.
 When sorrow wounds the breast, as ploughs the glebe, 275
 And hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning show'r :
 Her seed celestial, then, glad wisdom sows ;
 Her golden harvest triumphs in the soil.
 If so, Narcissa, welcome my relapse ;
 I'll raise a tax on my calamity, 280
 And reap rich compensation for my pain.
 I'll range the plenteous intellectual field,
 And gather ev'ry thought of sov'reign pow'r
 To chase the moral maladies of man ;
 Thoughts which may bear transplanting to the skies, 285
 Tho' natives of this coarse penurious soil ;
 Nor wholly wither there where seraphs sing,
 Refin'd, exalted, not annull'd, in Heav'n :
 Reason, the sun that gives them birth, the same
 In either clime, tho' more illustrious there. 290
 These choicely cull'd, and elegantly rang'd,
 Shall form a garland for Narcissa's tomb,
 And, peradventure, of no fading flow'rs.

Say, on what themes shall puzzled choice descend ?

" Th'

" Th'importance of contemplating the tomb ; 295

" Why men decline it ; suicide's foul birth ;

" The various kinds of grief ; the faults of age ;

" And death's dread character—invite my song."

And, first, th'importance of our end survey'd.

Friends counsel quick dismissal of our grief. 300

Mistaken kindness ! our hearts heal too soon.

Are they more kind than He who struck the blow ?

Who bid it do his errand in our hearts,

And banish peace till nobler guests arrive,

And bring it back a true and endless peace ? 305

Calamities are friends : as glaring day

Of these unnumber'd lustres robs our sight,

Prosperity puts out unnumber'd thoughts

Of import high, and light divine to man.

The man how blest'd, who, sick of gaudy scenes, 310

(Scenes apt to thrust between us and ourselves !)

Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk

Beneath Death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,

Unpierc'd by Vanity's fantastic ray ;

To read his monuments, to weigh his dust, 315

Visit his vaults, and dwell among his tombs !

Lorenzo, read with me Narcissa's stone ;

(Narcissa was thy fav'rite) let us read

Her moral stone ; few doctors preach so well ;

Few orators so tenderly can touch 320

The feeling heart. What pathos in the date !

Apt words can strike ; and yet in them we see

Faint images of what we here enjoy.

What cause have we to build on length of life ?

Temptations seize when fear is laid asleep, 325

And ill foreboded is our strongest guard.

See from her tomb, as from an humble shrine,

Truth, radiant goddess ! sallies on my soul,

And puts Delusion's dusky train to flight :

Dispels the mist our sultry passions raise, 330

From objects low, terrestrial, and obscene,

And shews the real estimate of things,

Which no man, unafflicted, ever saw ;

Pulls off the veil from Virtue's rising charms ;

Detects temptation in a thousand lies. 335
 Truth bids me look on men as autumn leaves,
 And all they bleed for as the summer's dust
 Driv'n by the whirlwind: lighted by her beams,
 I widen my horizon, gain new pow'rs,
 See things invisible, feel things remote, 340
 Am present with futurities; think nought
 To man so foreign as the joys possess'd;
 Nought so much his as those beyond the grave.
 No folly keeps its colour in her sight;
 Pale worldly wisdom loses all her charms; 345
 In pompous promise from her schemes profound,
 If future fate she plans, 'tis all in leaves,
 Like Sibyl, unsubstantial, fleeting bliss;
 At the first blast it vanishes in air.
 Not so celestial. Wouldst thou know, Lorenzo, 350
 How differ worldly wisdom and divine?
 Just as the waning and the waxing moon:
 More empty worldly wisdom ev'ry day;
 And ev'ry day more fair her rival shines.
 When later, there's less time to play the fool. 355
 Soon our whole term for wisdom is expir'd,
 (Thou know'st she calls no council in the grave)
 And everlasting fool is writ in fire,
 Or real wisdom wafts us to the skies.
 As worldly schemes resemble Sibyls leaves, 360
 The good man's days to Sibyls books compare,
 (In ancient story read, thou know'st the tale)
 In price still rising as in number less,
 Inestimable quite his final hour.
 For that who thrones can offer, offer thrones; 365
 Insolvent worlds the purchase cannot pay.
 "Oh! let me die his death!" all nature cries.
 "Then live his life."—All nature falters there;
 Our great physician daily to consult,
 To commune with the grave our only cure. 370
 What grave prescribes the best?—A friend's; and yet
 From a friend's grave how soon we disengage!
 Ev'n to the dearest, as his marble, cold.
 Why are friends ravish'd from us? 'Tis to bind,

By soft Affection's ties, or human hearts 375

The thought of death, which reason, too supine,

Or misemploy'd, so rarely fastens there.

Nor reason, nor affection, no, nor both

Combin'd, can break the witchcrafts of the world.

Behold th'inexorable hour at hand ! 380

Behold th'inexorable hour forgot !

And to forget it the chief aim of life,

Tho' well to ponder it is life's chief end.

Is death, that ever-threat'ning, ne'er remote,

That all-important, and that only sure, 385

(Come when he will) an unexpected guest ?

Nay, tho' invited by the loudest calls

Of blind imprudence, unexpected still,

Tho' num'rous messengers are sent before,

To warn his great arrival. What the cause, 390

The wond'rous cause, of this mysterious ail ?

All Heav'n looks down astonish'd at the sight.

Is it that Life has sown her joys so thick,

We can't thrust in a single care between ?

Is it that Life has such a swarm of cares, 395

The thought of death can't enter for the throng ?

Is it that Time steals on with downy feet,

Nor wakes Indulgence from her golden dream ?

To-day is so like yesterday, it cheats :

We take the lying sister for the same. 400

Life glides away, Lorenzo, like a brook,

For ever changing, unperceiv'd the change,

In the same brook none ever bath'd him twice ;

To the same life none ever twice awoke.

We call the brook the same ; the same we think. 405

Our life, tho' still more rapid in its flow,

Nor mark the much irrevocably laps'd,

And mingled with the sea. Or shall we say

(Retaining still the brook to bear us on)

That life is like a vessel on the stream ? 410

In life embark'd, we smoothly down the tide

Of time descend, but not on time intent ;

Amus'd, unconscious of the gliding wave,

Till on a sudden we perceive a snook ;

We start, awake, look out; what see we there ? 415
Our brittle bark is burst on Charon's shore.

Is this the cause death flies all human thought ?
Or is it judgment, by the will struck blind,
That domineering mistress of the soul!
Like him so strong by Dalilah the fair ? 420

Or is it fear turns startled reason back
From looking down a precipice so steep ?
'Tis dreadful, and the dread is wisely plac'd
By nature, conscious of the make of man.
A dreadful friend it is, a terror kind, 425

A flaming sword to guard the tree of life.
By that unaw'd in life's most smiling hour
The good man would repine; would suffer joys,
And burn impatient for his promis'd skies.

The bad, on each punctilious pique of pride 430
Or gloom of humour, would give rage the rein,
Bound o'er the barrier, rush into the dark,
And mar the scenes of Providence below.

What groan was that Lorenzo ? Furies, rise,
And drown, in your less execrable yell, 435
Britannia's shame. There took her gloomy flight,
On wing impetuous, a black sullen foul,
Blasted from hell, with horrid lust of death.

Thy friend, the brave, the gallant Altamont,
So call'd, so thought,—and then he fled the field, 440
Less base the fear of death than fear of life.

O Britain ! infamous for suicide !
An island, in thy manners, far disjoin'd
From the whole world of rationals beside !
In ambient waves plunge thy polluted head, 445
Wash the dire stain, nor shock the continent.

But thou be shock'd while I detect the cause
Of self-assault, expose the monster's birth,
And bid abhorrence hiss it round the world.
Blame not thy clime, nor chide the distant sun ; 450
The sun is innocence, thy clime absolv'd.

Immoral climes kind nature never made.

The cause I sing in Eden might prevail,

And proves it is thy folly, not thy fate.

The soul of man (let man in homage bow 455
 Who names his soul) a native of the skies !
 High-born and free, her freedom should maintain,
 Unfold, unmortgag'd, for earth's little bribes.
 Th'illustrious stranger, in this foreign land,
 Like strangers, jealous of her dignity, 460
 Studious of home, and ardent to return,
 Of earth suspicious, earth's enchanted cup
 With cool reserve light touching, should indulge
 On immortality her godlike taste ;
 There take large draughts ; make her chief banquet there. 465
 But some reject this sustenance divine ;
 To beggarly vile appetites descend,
 Ask alms of earth for guests that came from heav'n ;
 Sink into slaves, and sell for present hire
 Their rich reversion and (what shares its fate) 470
 Their native freedom to the prince who sways
 This nether world : and when his payments fail,
 When his foul basket gorges them no more,
 Or their pall'd palates loath the basket full,
 Are instantly, with wild demoniac rage, 475
 For breaking all the chains of Providence,
 And bursting their confinement, tho' fast barr'd
 By laws divine and human, guarded strong
 With horrors doubled to defend the pass,
 The blackest nature or dire guilt can raise, 480
 And moated round with fathomless destruction,
 Sure to receive, and overwhelm them in their fall.
 Such, Britons, is the cause to you unknown,
 Or, worse, o'erlook'd, o'erlook'd by magistrates,
 Thus criminals themselves. I grant the deed 485
 Is madness, but the madness of the heart.
 And what is that ? Our utmost bound of guilt.
 A sensual unreflecting life is big
 With monst'rous births and suicide, to crown
 The black infernal brood. The bold to break 490
 Heav'n's law supreme, and desperately rush
 Thro' sacred nature's murder on their own,
 Because they never think of death, they die.
 'Tis equally man's duty, glory, gain,

At once to shun and meditate his end. 495
 When by the bed of languishment we sit,
 (The seat of wildom ! if our choice, not fate)
 Or o'er our dying friends in anguish hang,
 Wipe the cold dew, or stay the sinking head,
 Number their moments, and in ev'ry clock 500
 Start at the voice of an eternity ;
 See the dim lamp of life just feebly lift
 An agonizing beam, at us to gaze,
 Then sink again, and quiver into death,
 That most pathetic herald of our own ; 505
 How read we such sad scenes ? As sent to man
 In perfect vengeance ? No, in pity sent,
 To melt him down, like wax, and then impress,
 Indelible, death's image on his heart,
 Bleeding for others, trembling for himself. 510
 We bleed, we tremble, we forget, we smile.
 The mind turns fool before the cheek is dry.
 Our quick returning folly cancels all,
 As the tide rushing raises what is writ
 In yielding sands, and smooths the letter'd shore. 515
 Lorenzo, hast thou ever weigh'd a sigh ?
 Or study'd the philosophy of tears ?
 (A science yet unlectur'd in our schools)
 Hast thou descended deep into the breast,
 And seen their source ? if not, descend with me, 520
 And trace these briny riv'lets to their springs.
 Our fun'ral tears from diff'rent causes rise :
 As if from sep'rate cisterns in the soul,
 Of various kinds they flow. From tender hearts,
 By soft contagion call'd, some burst at once, 525
 And stream obsequious to the leading eye :
 Some ask more time, by curious art distill'd.
 Some hearts, in secret hard, unapt to melt,
 Struck by the magic of the public eye,
 Like Moses's smitten rock, gush out amain : 530
 Some weep to share the fame of the deceas'd,
 So high in merit, and to them so dear :
 They dwell on praises which they think they share,
 And thus, without a blush, commend themselves.

Some

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

81

Some mourn in proof that something they could love : 535

They weep not to relieve their grief, but shew.

Some weep in perfect justice to the dead,

As conscious all their love is in arrear.

Some mischievously weep, not unappriz'd.

Tears sometimes aid the conquest of an eye.

540

With what address the soft Ephesians drew

Their fable network o'er entangled hearts !

As seen thro' crystal, how their roses glow,

While liquid pearl runs trickling down their cheek !

Of her's not prouder Egypt's wanton queen,

545

Carousing gems, herself dissolv'd in love.

Some weep at death, abstracted from the dead,

And celebrate, like Charles, their own decease.

By kind construction some are deem'd to weep,

Because a decent veil conceals their joy.

550

Some weep in earnest, and yet weep in vain,

As deep in indiscretion as in woe.

Passion, blind passion ! impotently pours

Tears that deserve more tears, while Reason sleeps,

Or gazes, like an idiot, unconcern'd,

555

Nor comprehends the meaning of the storm ;

Knows not it speaks to her, and her alone.

Irrationals all sorrow are beneath,

That noble gift ! that privilege of man !

From sorrow's pang, the birth of endless joy :

560

But these are barren of that birth divine ;

They weep impetuous as the summer storm,

And full as short ! the cruel grief soon tam'd,

They make a pastime of the stingle's tale ;

Far as the deep-resounding kne'l they spread

565

The dreadful news, and hardly feel it more :

No grain of wisdom pays them for their woe.

Half-round the globe, the tears pump'd up by death

Are spent in wat'ring vanities of life ;

In making folly flourish still more fair.

570

When the sick soul, her wonted stay withdrawn,

Reclines on earth, and sorrows in the dust,

Instead of learning there her true support,

Tho' there thrown down her true support to learn,

Without Heav'n's aid, impatient to be blest, 575
 She crawls to the next shrub or bramble vile,
 Tho' from the stately cedar's arms she fell :
 With stale forsworn embraces clings anew,
 The stranger weds, and blossoms, as before,
 In all the fruitless fopperies of life, 580
 Presents her weed, well fancy'd, at the ball,
 And raffles for the death's head on the ring.

So wept Aurelia, till the destin'd youth
 Stept in with his receipt for making smiles,
 And blanching fables into bridal bloom. 585

So wept Lorenzo fair Clarissa's fate,
 Who gave that angel boy on whom he doats ;
 And dy'd to give him, orphan'd in his birth !
 Not such, Narcissa, my distress for thee.
 I'll make an altar of thy sacred tomb, 590
 To sacrifice to Wisdom.—What wast thou ?

“ Young, gay, and fortunate ! ” Each yields a theme :
 I'll dwell on each, to shun thought more severe ;
 (Heav'n knows I labour with severer still !)
 I'll dwell on each, and quite exhaust thy death. 595
 A soul without reflection, like a pile
 Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.

And, first, thy youth : what says it to grey hairs ?
 Narcissa, I'm become thy pupil now.—
 Early, bright, transient, chaste, as morning dew, 600
 She sparkl'd, was exhal'd, and went to Heav'n.

Time on this head has snow'd, yet still 'tis borne
 Aloft, nor thinks but on another's grave.
 Cover'd with shame I speak it, age severe
 Old worn-out vice sets down for virtue fair ; 605

With graceless gravity chastising youth,
 That youth chastis'd surpassing in a fault,
 Father of all, forgetfulness of death ;
 As if, like objects pressing on the sight,
 Death had advanc'd too near us to be seen ; 610

Or that life's loan time ripen'd into right,
 And men might plead prescription from the grave ;
 Deathless, from repetition of reprieve.
 Deathless ? far from it ! such are dead already ;

Their

Their hearts are bury'd, and the world's their grave. 615

Tell me, some God! my guardian angel, tell
What thus infatuates? what enchantment plants
The phantom of an age 'twixt us and death,
Already at the door? He knocks; we hear him,
And yet we will not hear. What mail defends 620

Our untouch'd hearts! what miracle turns off
The pointed thought, which from a thousand quivers
Is daily darted, and is daily shunn'd?

We stand, as in a battle, throngs on throngs
Around us falling, wounded oft ourselves; 625
Tho' bleeding with our wounds, immortal still!

We see Time's furrows on another's brow,
And Death intrench'd, preparing his assault:
How few themselves in that just mirror see!
Or, seeing, draw their inference as strong! 630

There death is certain; doubtful here: he must,
And soon: we may, within an age, expire.
Tho' grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green:
Like damag'd clocks, whose hand and bell dissent;
Folly sings six, while Nature points at twelve. 635

Absurd longevity! More, more it cries:
More life, more wealth, more trash of ev'ry kind,
And wherefore mad for more, when relish fails?
Object and appetite must club for joy:
Shall folly labour hard to mend the bow, 640

Baubles, I mean, that strike us from without,
While Nature is relaxing ev'ry string!
Ask Thought for joy; grow rich, and hoard within.
Think you the soul, when this life's rattles cease,
Has nothing of more manly to succeed? 645

Contract the taste immortal; learn e'en now
To relish what alone subsists hereafter.
Divine, or none, henceforth, your joys for ever.
Of age the glory is to wish to die:

That wish is praise and promise; it applauds 650
Past life, and promises our future bliss.

What weakness see not children in their fires!
Grand-climacterical absurdities!

Grey-hair'd authority, to faults of youth

How shocking ! it makes folly thrice a fool ;
 And our first childhood might our last despise.
 Peace and esteem is all that age can hope :
 Nothing but Wisdom gives the first ; the last
 Nothing but the repute of being wise.
 Folly bars both : our age is quite undone. 655

What folly can be ranker ? Like our shadows,
 Our wishes lengthen as our sun declines.
 No wish should loiter, then, this side the grave,
 Our hearts should leave the world before the knell
 Calls for our carcases to mend the soil. 665
 Enough to live in tempest ; die in port :
 Age should fly concourse, cover in retreat
 Defects of judgment, and the will subdue ;
 Walk thoughtful on the silent solemn shore
 Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon, 670
 And put good works on board, and wait the wind
 That shortly blows us into worlds unknown :
 If unconsider'd, too, a dreadful scene !

All should be prophets to themselves : foresee
 Their future fate ; their future fate foretaste : 675
 This art would waste the bitterness of death.
 The thought of death alone the fear destroys :
 A disaffection to that precious thought
 Is more than midnight darkness on the soul,
 Which sleeps beneath it on a precipice, 680
 Puff'd off by the first blast, and lost for ever.

Dost ask, Lorenzo, Why so warmly prest,
 By repetition hammer'd on thine ear,
 The thought of death ? That thought is the machine,
 The grand machine, that heaves us from the dust, 685
 And rears us into men ! That thought ply'd home,
 Will soon reduce the ghastly precipice
 O'erhanging hell, will soften the descent,
 And gently slope our passage to the grave.
 How warmly to be wish'd ! what heart of flesh 690
 Would trifle with tremendous ? dare extremes
 Yawn o'er the fate of infinite ? what hand,
 Beyond the blackest brand of censure hold,
 (To speak a language too well known to thee)

Would

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

85

Would at a moment give it all to chance,
And stamp the dye for an eternity ?

695

Aid me, Narcissa ! aid me to keep pace
With Destiny, and, ere her scissars cut
My thread of life, to break this tougher thread
Of mortal death that ties me to the world.

700

Sting thou my slumb'ring reason to send forth
A thought of observation on the foe ;
To sally, and survey the rapid march
Of his ten thousand messengers to man,
Who, Jehu like, behind him turns them all.
All accident apart, by Nature sign'd,
My warrant is gone out, tho' dormant yet ;
Perhaps behind one moment lurks my fate.

705

Must I then forward only look for death ?
Backward I turn mine eye, and find him there.
Man is a self survivor ev'ry year.

710

Man, like a stream, is in perpetual flow.
Death's a destroyer of quotidian prey :
My youth, my noontide his ! my yesterday ;
The bold invader shares the present hour.

715

Each moment on the former shuts the grave,
While man is growing, life is in decrease,
And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
Our birth is nothing but our death begun,
As tapers waste that instant they take fire.

720

Shall we then fear, lest that should come to pass,
Which comes to pass each moment of our lives ?
If fear we must, let that death turn us pale
Which murders strength and ardour ; what remains
Should rather call on Death than dread his call.

725

Ye partners of my fault, and my decline !
Thoughtless of death but when your neighbour's knell
(Rude visitant) knocks hard at your dull sense,
And with its thunder scarce obtains your ear !

Be death your theme in ev'ry place and hour ;
Nor longer want, ye monumental Sires,

730

A brother's tomb to tell you, you shall die.
That death you dread (so great in Nature's skill !)
Know you shall court before you shall enjoy.

But

But you are learn'd ; in volumes deep you sit, 735
 In wisdom shallow. Pompous ignorance !
 Would you be still more learned than the learn'd ?
 Learn well to know how much need not be known,
 And what that knowledge which impairs your sense.
 Our needful knowledge, like our needful food, 740
 Unhedg'd, lies open in life's common field,
 And bids all welcome to the vital feast.
 You scorn what lies before you in the page
 Of nature and experience, moral truth !
 Of indispensable, eternal fruit ! 745
 Fruit on which mortals feeding turn to gods ;
 And dive in science for distinguish'd names,
 Dishonest fomentation of your pride,
 Sinking in virtue as you rise in fame
 Your learning, like the lunar beam, affords 750
 Light, but not heat ; it leaves you undevout,
 Frozen at heart, while speculation shines.
 Awake, ye curious Indagators ; fond
 Of knowing all but what avails you known.
 If you would learn Death's character, attend. 755
 All casts of conduct, all degrees of health,
 All dyes of fortune, and all dates of age,
 Together shook in his impartial urn,
 Come forth at random ; or, if choice is made,
 The choice is quite sarcastic, and insults 760
 All bold conjecture and fond hopes of man.
 What countless multitudes not only leave,
 But deeply disappoints us, by their deaths !
 Tho' great our sorrow, greater our surprise.
 Like other tyrants, Death delights to smite, 765
 What, smitten, most proclaims the pride of pow'r
 And arbitrary nod. His joy supreme,
 To bid the wretch survive the fortunate ;
 The feeble wrap th'athletic in his shroud ;
 And weeping fathers build their childrens tomb : 770
 Me thine, Narcissa !—What, tho' short thy date ?
 Virtue, not rolling suns, the mind matures.
 That life is long which answers life's great end.
 The time that bears no fruit deserves no name.

The

The man of wisdom is the man of years. 775

In hoary youth Methuselems may die ;
O how misdated on their flatt'ring tombs !

Narcissia's youth has lectur'd me thus far :

And can her gaiety give counsel too ?

That, like the Jews fam'd oracles of gems, 780

Sparkles instruction ; such as throws new light,

And opens more the character of Death,

Ill known to thee, Lorenzo, this thy vaunt !

" Give Death his due, the wretched and the old ;

" Ev'n let him sweep his rubbish to the grave ; 785

" Let him not violate kind Nature's laws,

" But own man born to live as well as die."

Wretched and old thou giv'st him ; young and gay

He takes ; and plunder is a tyrant's joy.

What if I prove, " the farthest from the fear 790

" Are often nearest to the stroke of fate ?"

All more than common, menaces an end.

A blaze betokens brevity of life.

As if bright embers should emit a flame,

Glad spirits sparkled from Narcissia's eye, 795

And made Youth younger, and taught Life to live.

As Nature's opposites wage endless war,

For this offence, as treason to the deep

Inviolable stupor of his reign.

Where lust and turbulent ambition sleep, 800

Death took swift vengeance. As he life detests,

More life is still more odious : and reduc'd

By conquest, aggrandizes more his pow'r.

But wherefore aggrandiz'd ? by Heav'n's decree

To plant the soul on her eternal guard, 805

In awful expectation of our end.

Thus runs Death's dread commission ; " Strike, but so,

" As most alarms the living by the dead."

Hence stratagem delights him, and surprise,

And cruel sport with man's securities. 810

Not simple conquest, triumph is his aim ;

And where least fear'd, there conquest triumphs most.

This proves my bold assertion not too bold.

What are his arts to lay our fears asleep ?

Tiberian

Tiberian arts his purposes wrap up
 In deep dissimulation's darkest night.
 Like princes unconfess'd in foreign courts,
 Who travel under cover, Death assumes
 The name and look of Life, and dwells among us ;
 He takes all shapes that serve his black designs ;
 Tho' master of a wider empire far
 Than that o'er which the Roman Eagle flew,
 Like Nero, he's a fiddler, charioteer ;
 Or drives his phaeton in female guise ;
 Quite unsuspected, till the wheel beneath
 His disarray'd oblation he devours.

815

820

825

He most effects the forms least like himself,
 His slender self : hence burly corpulence
 Is his familiar wear, and sleek disguise.
 Behind the rosy bloom he loves to lurk,
 Or ambush in a smile ; or, wanton, dive
 In dimples deep : Love's eddies, which draw in
 Unwary hearts, and sink them in despair.
 Such on Narcissa's couch he loiter'd long
 Unknown, and when detected, still was seen
 To smile : such peace has Innocence in death !

830

835

Most happy they ! whom least his arts deceive.
 One eye on death, and one full fix'd on Heav'n,
 Becomes a mortal and immortal man.
 Long on his wiles a piqu'd and jealous spy,
 I've seen ; or dream'd I saw, the tyrant Dress,
 Lay by his horrors, and put on his smiles.
 Say, muse ! for thou remember'st, call it back,
 And shew Lorenzo the surprising scene ;
 If't was a dream, his genius can explain.

840

845

'Twas in a circle of the gay I stood :
 Death would have enter'd ; Nature push'd him back :
 Supported by a doctor of renown,
 His point he gain'd ; then artfully dismiss'd
 The sage ; for Death design'd to be conceal'd.
 He gave an old vivacious usurer
 His meagre aspect, and his naked bones ;
 In gratitude for plumping up his prey,
 A pamper'd spendthrift, whose fantastic air,

850

Well-

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

89

Well-fashion'd figure, and cockaded brow,
He took in change, and underneath the pride
Of costly linen tuck'd his filthy shroud.
His crooked bow he straighten'd to a cane,
And hid his deadly shafts in Myra's eye.

855

The dreadful masquerader, thus equipp'd,
Outsallies on adventures. Ask you where?
Where is he not? For his peculiar haunts
Let this suffice; sure as night follows day,
Death treads in Pleasure's footsteps round the world,
When Pleasure treads the paths which Reason shuns.
When against Reason Riot shuts the door,
And Gaiety supplies the place of Sense,
Then, foremost, at the banquet and the ball,
Death leads the dance, or stamps the deadly dye:
Nor ever fails the midnight bowl to crown.

860

Gaily carousing to his gay compeers,
Inly he laughs to see them laugh at him,
As absent far; and when the revel burns,
When Fear is banish'd, and triumphant Thought,
Calling for all the joys beneath the moon,
Against him turns the key, and bids him sup
With their progenitors—he drops his mask,
Frowns out at full; they start, despair, expire.

865

870

Scarce with more sudden terror and surprise,
From his black mask of nitre, touch'd by fire,
He bursts, expands, roars, blazes, and devours.
And is not this triumphant treachery,
And more than simple conquest in the fiend?

875

880

And now, Lorenzo, dost thou wrap thy soul
In soft security, because unknown
Which moment is commission'd to destroy?
In death's uncertainty thy danger lies.
Is death uncertain? therefore thou be fix'd,
Fix'd as a centinel, all eye, all ear,
All expectation of the coming foe.

885

890

Rouse, stand in arms, nor lean against thy spear,
Lest Slumber steal one moment o'er thy soul,
And Fate surprise thee nodding. Watch, be strong;
Thus give each day the merit and renown

Of

Of dying well, tho' doom'd but once to die, 895
 Nor let life's period, hidden (as from most)
 Hide, too, from thee the precious use of life.

Early, not sudden, was Narcissa's fate :
 Soon, not surprising, Death his visit paid :
 Her thought went forth to meet him on his way, 900
 Nor Gaiety forgot it was to die.

Tho' fortune, too (our third and final theme)
 As an accomplice, play'd her gaudy plumes,
 And ev'ry glittering gewgaw, on her sight,
 To dazzle and debauch it from its mark. 905

Death's dreadful advent is the mark of man,
 And ev'ry thought that misses it is blind.
 Fortune with Youth and Gaiety conspir'd
 To weave a triple wreath of happiness.
 (If happiness on earth) to crown her brow : 910
 And could Death charge thro' such a shining shield ?

That shining shield invites the tyrant's spear,
 As if to damp our elevated aims,
 And strongly preach humility to man.
 O how portentous is prosperity ; 915

How, comet-like, it threatens while it shines !
 Few years but yield us proof of Death's ambition,
 To call his victims from the fairest fold,
 And sheath his shafts in all the pride of life.

When flooded with abundance, purpled o'er 920
 With recent honours, bloom'd with ev'ry bliss,
 Set up in ostentation, made the gaze,
 The gaudy centre, of the public eye ;

When Fortune, thus, has tofs'd her child in air,
 Snatch'd from the covert of an humble state, 925
 How often have I seen him dropt at once,
 Our morning's envy ! and our evening's sigh !

As if her bounties were the signal giv'n,
 The flow'ry wreath, to mark the sacrifice,
 And call Death's arrows on the destin'd prey. 930

High Fortune seems in cruel league with Fate.
 Ask you for what ? To give his war on man
 The deeper dread, and more illustrious spoil ;
 Thus to keep daring mortals more in awe.

And

NIGHT THE FIFTH.

91

And burns Lorenzo still for the sublime
Of life ; to hang his airy nest on high,
On the slight timber of the topmost bough,
Rock'd at each breeze, and menacing a fall ?
Granting grim Death at equal distance there,
Yet peace begins just where ambition ends.
What makes man wretched ? happiness deny'd ?
Lorenzo ! no ; 'tis happiness disdain'd.
She comes too meanly dress'd to win our smiles,
And calls herself Content, a homely name ;
Our flame is transport, and content our scorn.
Ambition turns, and shuts the door against her,
And weds a toil, a tempest, in her stead ;
A tempest to warm transport near a-kin.
Unknowing what our mortal state admits,
Life's modest joys we ruin while we raise,
And all our ecstasies are wounds to peace ;
Peace, the full portion of mankind below.

935

940

945

950

And since thy peace is dear, ambitious Youth !
Of fortune fond ! as thoughtless of thy fate !
As late I drew Death's picture, to stir up
Thy wholesome fears, now, drawn in contrast, see
Gay Fortune's, thy vain hopes to reprimand.
See, high in air the sportive goddess hangs,
Unlocks her casket, spreads her glitt'ring ware,
And calls the giddy winds to puff abroad
Her random bounties o'er the gaping throng.
All rush rapacious ; friends o'er trodden friends,
Sons o'er their fathers, subjects o'er their kings,
Priests o'er their gods, and lovers o'er the fair,
(Still more ador'd) to snatch the golden show'r.

955

960

965

Gold glitters most where virtue shines no more,
As stars from absent suns have leave to shine.
O what a precious pack of votaries,
Unkennell'd from the prisons and the stews,
Pour in, all op'ning in their idol's praise !
All, ardent, eye each wafture of her hand,
And, wide-expanding their voracious jaws,
Morsel on morsel swallow down unchew'd,
Untasted, thro' mad appetite for more ;

970

Gorg'd

Gorg'd to the throat, yet lean and rav'nous still : 975
 Sagacious all to trace the smallest game,
 And bold to seize the greatest. If (blest chance !)
 Court-zephyrs sweetly breathe, they launch, they fly
 O'er just, o'er sacred, all-forbidden ground,
 Drunk with the burning scent of place or pow'r, 980
 Staunch to the foot of Lucre till they die.
 ! Or if for men you take them, as I mark
 Their manners, thou their various fates survey.
 With aim misineasur'd, and impetuous speed,
 Some, darting, strike their ardent wish far off, 985
 Thro' fury to possess it : some succeed,
 But stumble and let fall the taken prize.
 From some, by sudden blasts, 'tis whirl'd away,
 And lodg'd in bosoms that ne'er dream'd of gain.
 To some it sticks so close, that, when torn off, 990
 Torn is the man, and mortal is the wound.
 Some, o'er-enamour'd of their bags, run mad,
 Groan under gold, yet weep for want of bread.
 Together some (unhappy rivals !) seize,
 And rend abundance into poverty ; 995
 Loud croaks the raven of the law, and smiles ;
 Smiles too the goddess : but smiles most at those
 (Just victims of exorbitant desire !)
 Who perish at their own request, and whelm'd
 Beneath her load of lavish grants, expire. 1000
 Fortune is famous for her numbers slain ;
 The number small which happiness can bear.
 Tho' various for a while their fates, at last
 One curse involves them all : at Death's approach
 All read their riches backward into loss, 1005
 And mourn in just proportion to their store.
 And Death's approach (if orthodox my song)
 Is hasten'd by the lure of Fortune's smiles.
 And art thou still a glutton of bright gold ?
 And art thou still rapacious of thy ruin ? 1010
 Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow ;
 A blow which, while it executes, alarms,
 And startles thousands with a single fall.
 As when some stately growth of oak, or pine,

Which

Which nods aloft, and proudly spreads her shade,
 The sun's defiance, and the flock's defence,
 By the strong strokes of lab'ring hinds subdu'd,
 Loud groans her last, and, rushing from her height,
 In cumbrous ruin thunders to the ground;
 The conscious forest trembles at the shock,
 And hill, and stream, and distant dale resound. 1015
 These high-aim'd darts of Death, and these alone,
 Should I collect, my cover would be full;
 A quiver which, suspended in mild air,
 Or near Heav'n's archer, in the zodiac, hung,
 (So could it be) should draw the public eye,
 The gaze and contemplation of mankind!
 A constellation awful, yet benign,
 To guide the gay thro' life's tempestuous wave,
 Nor suffer them to strike the common rock; 1020
 "From greater danger to grow more secure,
 "And, wrapt in happiness, forget their fate."
 Lysander, happy past the common lot,
 Was warn'd of danger, but too gay to fear,
 He woo'd the fair Aspatia; she was kind. 1025
 In youth, form, fortune, fame, they both were blest;
 All who knew envy'd; yet in envy lov'd;
 Can Fancy form more finish'd happiness?
 Fix'd was the nuptial hour. Her stately dome
 Rose on the sounding beach. * The glitt'ring spires 1030
 Float in the wave, and break against the shore:
 So break those glitt'ring shadows, human joys.
 The faithless morning smil'd: he takes his leave
 To re-embrace, in ecstasies, at eve:
 The rising storm forbids: the news arrives; 1035
 Untold she saw it in her servant's eye.
 She felt it seen (her heart was apt to feel)
 And drown'd, without the furious ocean's aid,
 In suffocating sorrows shares his tomb.
 Now round the sumptuous bridal monument 1040
 The guilty billows innocently roar,
 And the rough sailor passing, drops a tear.
 A tear?—can tears suffice?—but not for me.
 How vain our efforts! and our arts how vain! 1045
 1050

The distant train of thought I took, to shun, 1055
Has thrown me on my fate.—These dy'd together ;
Happy in ruin ! undivorc'd by death !
Or ne'er to meet, or ne'er to part is peace.—
Narcissa, Pity bleeds at thought of thee :
Yet thou wast only near me, not myself. 1060
Survive myself ?—that cures all other woe.
Narcissa lives ; Philander is forgot.
O the soft commerce ! O the tender ties,
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart !
Which broken, break them, and drain off the soul 1065
Of human joy, and make it pain to live.—
And is it then to live ? when such friends part
'Tis the survivor dies.—My heart ! no more.

End of Night the Fifth.

THE
COMPLAINT.

THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.
IN TWO PARTS.

Containing the
Nature, Proof, and Importance, of Immortality.

PART I.

Where, amongst other Things,
Glory and Riches are particularly considered.

Inscribed to the Right Honourable
HENRY PELHAM,
*First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury, and Chancellor of
the Exchequer.*

NIGHT THE SIXTH.

SHE* (for I know not yet her name in Heav'n)
Not early, like Narcissa, left the scene,
Nor sudden, like Philander. What avail?
This seeming mitigation but inflames:
This fancy'd medicine heightens the disease.
The longer known, the closer still she grew,
And gradual parting is a gradual death.
'Tis th: grim tyrant's engine which extorts,
By tardy pressure's still increasing weight,
From hardest hearts confession of distress.

5

10

* Referring to Night Fifth.

O the long dark approach, thro' years of pain,
 Death's gall'ry ! (might I dare to call it so)
 With dismal doubt and fable terror hung,
 Sick Hope's pale lamp its only glimm'ring ray :
 There Fate my melancholy walk ordain'd,
 Forbid Self-love itself to flatter there.

15

How oft I gaz'd, prophetically sad !
 How oft I saw her dead, while yet in smiles !
 In smiles she sunk her grief to lessen mine :
 She spoke me comfort, and increas'd my pain.

20

Like pow'rful armies, trenching at a town,
 By slow and silent, but resistless, sap,
 In his pale progress gently gaining ground,
 Death urg'd his deadly siege ; in spite of art,
 Of all the balmy blessings Nature lends
 To succour frail humanity. Ye Stars !

25

(Not now first made familiar to my sight)
 And thou, O Moon ! bear witness ; many a night
 He tore the pillow from beneath my head,
 Ty'd down my fore attention to the shock,
 By ceaseless depredations on a life

30

Dearer than that he left me. Dreadful post
 Of observation ! darker ev'ry hour !
 Less dread the day that drove me to the brink,
 And pointed out eternity below,
 When my soul shudder'd at futurity ;
 When, on a moment's point th'important dye
 Of life and death spun doubtful, ere it fell,
 And turn'd up life, my title to more woe.

35

But why more woe ? More comfort let it be.
 Nothing is dead but that which wish'd to die ;
 Nothing is dead but wretchedness and pain ;
 Nothing is dead but what incumber'd, gall'd,
 Block'd up the pass, and barr'd from real life.
 Where dwells that wish most ardent of the wise ?

40

Too dark the sun to see it ; highest stars
 Too low to reach it ; Death, great death alone,
 O'er stars and sun triumphant, lands us there.

45

Nor dreadful our transition, tho' the mind,
 An artist at creating self-alarms,

50
Rich

Rich in expedients for inquietude,
 Is prone to paint it dreadful. Who can take
 Death's portrait true? the tyrant never sat.
 Our sketch all random strokes, conjecture all;
 Close shuts the grave, nor tells one single tale.
 Death and his image rising in the brain
 Bear faint resemblance; never are alike;
 Fear shakes the pencil; Fancy loves excess;
 Dark ignorance is lavish of her shades;
 And these the formidable picture draw.

85

60

But grant the worst, 'tis past; new prospects rise,
 And drop a veil eternal o'er her tomb.

Far other views our contemplation claim,
 Views that o'erpay the rigours of our life;
 Views that suspend our agonies in death.

65

Wrapt in the thought of immortality,
 Wrapt in the single, the triumphant thought!
 Long life might lapse, age unperceiv'd come on,
 And find the soul unsated with her theme.

Its nature, proof, importance, fire my song.

70

O that my song could emulate my soul!

Like her, immortal. No! the soul disdains
 A mark so mean; far nobler hope inflames;
 If endless ages can outweigh an hour,
 Let not the laurel, but the palm, inspire.

75

Thy nature, Immortality, who knows?

And yet who knows it not? It is but life

In stronger thread of brighter colour spun,

And spun for ever; dipt by cruel Fate

In Stygian dye, how black, how brittle, here!

80

How short our correspondence with the sun!

And while it lasts inglorious! Our best deeds,

How wanting in their weight! Our highest joys,

Small cordials to support us in our pain,

And give us strength to suffer. But how great

85

To mingle int'rest, converse amities,

With all the sons of reason, scatter'd wide

Thro' habitable space, wherever born,

Howe'er endow'd! To live free citizens

Of universal nature; to lay hold,

90

By more than feeble faith, on the Supreme !
 To call Heav'n's rich unfathomable mines
 (Mines which support archangels in their state)
 Our own ! to rise in science as in bliss,
 Initiate in the secrets of the skies !
 To read creation ; read its mighty plan
 In the bare bosom of the Deity !
 The plan and execution to collate !
 To see, before each glance of piercing thought
 All cloud, all shadow, blown remote, and leave
 No mystery—but that of love divine,
 Which lifts us on the seraph's flaming wing,
 From earth's aceldama, this field of blood,
 Of inward anguish, and of outward ill,
 From darkness and from dust, to such a scene !
 Love's element ! true joy's illustrious home !
 From earth's sad contrast (now deplor'd) more fair !
 What exquisite vicissitude of fate !
 Bles'd absolution of our blackest hour !

95

100

105

110

Lorenzo, these are thoughts that make man, man,
 The wise illumine, aggrandize the great.
 How great (while yet we tread the kindred clod,
 And ev'ry moment fear to sink beneath
 The clod we tread, soon trodden by our sons)
 How great, in the wild whirl of time's pursuits,
 To stop, and pause ; involv'd high presage
 Thro' the long vista of a thousand years,
 To stand contemplating our distant selves,
 As in a magnifying mirror seen,
 Enlarg'd, ennobled, elevate, divine !
 To prophesy our own futurities !
 To gaze in thought on what all thought transcends !
 To talk, with fellow candidates, of joys
 As far beyond conception as desert,
 Ourselves th'astonish'd talkers and the tale !

115

120

125

Lorenzo, swells thy bosom at the thought ?
 The swell becomes thee : 'tis an honest pride.
 Revere thyself,—and yet thyself despise.
 His nature no man can o'er-rate, and none
 Can under-rate his merit, Take good heed,

130
Nor

Nor there be modest where thou shouldst be proud :
 That almost universal error shun.
 How just our pride, when we behold those heights !
 Not those Ambition paints in air, but those
 Reason points out, and ardent Virtue gains, 135
 And angels emulate. Our pride how just !
 When mount we ? when these shackles quit ? when quit
 This cell of the creation ? this small nest,
 Stuck in a corner of the universe.
 Wrapt up in fleecy cloud and fine-spun air ? 140
 Fine-spun to sense, but gross and feculent
 To souls celestial ; souls ordain'd to breathe
 Ambrosial gales, and drink a purer sky ;
 Greatly triumphant on Time's farther shore,
 Where virtue reigns, enrich'd with full arrears, 145
 While Pomp imperial begs an alms of Peace.
 In empire high, or in proud science deep,
 Ye born of earth ! on what can you confer,
 With half the dignity, with half the gain,
 The gust, the glow, of rational delight, 150
 As this theme, which angels praise and share ?
 Man's fates and favours are a theme in Heav'n.
 What wretched repetition cloy us here !
 What periodic potions for the sick !
 Distemper'd bodies ! and distemper'd minds ! 155
 In an eternity what scenes shall strike !
 Adventures thicken ! novelties surprise !
 What webs of wonder shall unravel there !
 What full day pour on all the path of Heav'n,
 And light th'Almighty's footsteps in the deep ! 160
 How shall the blessed day of our discharge
 Unwind, at once, the labyrinths of Fate,
 And straighten its inextricable maze !
 If inextinguishable thirst in man
 To know how rich, how full, our banquet there ! 165
 There, not the moral world alone unfolds ;
 The world material, lately seen in shades,
 And in those shades by fragments only seen,
 And seen those fragments by the lab'ring eye,
 Unbroken, then, illustrious and entire, 170
 Its

Its ample sphere, its universal frame,
 In full dimensions, swells to the survey,
 And enters, at one glance, the ravish'd sight.
 From some superior point (where who can tell?
 Suffice it 'tis a point where gods reside) 175
 How shall the stranger man's illumin'd eye,
 In the vast ocean of unbounded space,
 Behold an infinite of floating worlds
 Divide the crystal waves of ether pure,
 In endless voyage without port? The least 180
 Of these disseminated orbs how great!
 Great as they are, what numbers these surpass,
 Huge as Leviathan to that small race,
 Those twinkling multitudes of little life,
 He swallows unperceiv'd! Stupendous these; 185
 Yet what are these stupendous to the whole?
 As particles, as atoms ill-perceiv'd;
 As circulating globules in our veins;
 So vast the plan. Fecundity divine!
 Exub'rant source! perhaps I wrong thee still. 190
 If admiration is a source of joy,
 What transport hence! yet this the least in Heav'n.
 What this to that illustrious robe he wears,
 Who toss'd this mass of wonders from his hand
 A specimen, an earnest of his pow'r? 195
 'Tis to that glory, whence all glory flows,
 As the mead's meanest flow'ret to the sun
 Which gave it birth. But what this sun of Heav'n?
 This bliss supreme of the supremely blest?
 Death, only death, the question can resolve. 200
 By death cheap bought th'ideas of our joy;
 The bare ideas! solid happiness
 So distant from its shadow chac'd below.
 And chace we still the phantom thro' the fire,
 O'er bog, and brake, and precipice, till death? 205
 And toil we still for sublunary pay?
 Defy the dangers of the field and flood,
 Or, spider-like, spin out our precious all,
 Our more than vitals spin (if no regard
 To great futurity) in curious webs 210

Of subtle thought and exquisite design.
 (Fine net-work of the brain !) to catch a fly !
 The momentary buz of vain renown !
 A name ! a mortal immortality !

Or (meaner still) instead of grasping air, 215
 For sordid lucre plunge we in the mire ?

Drudge, sweat, thro' ev'ry shame, for ev'ry gain,
 For vile contaminating trash ; throw up
 Our hope in Heav'n, our dignity with man,
 And deify the dirt matur'd to gold ? 220

Ambition, Av'rice, the two dæmons these
 Which goad thro' ev'ry slough our human herd,
 Hard-travell'd from the cradle to the grave.
 How low the wretches stoop ! how steep they climb !
 These dæmons burn mankind, but most possess 225
 Lorenzo's bosom, and turn out the skies.

Is it in time to hide eternity ?
 And why not in an atom on the shore
 To cover ocean ? or a mote the sun ?
 Glory and wealth ! have they this blinding pow'r ! 230
 What if to them I prove Lorenzo blind ?
 Would it surprise thee ? Be thou then surpris'd ;
 Thou neither know'st : their nature learn from me.

Mark well, as foreign as these subjects seem,
 What close connexion ties them to my theme. 235

First, what is true ambition ? The pursuit
 Of glory nothing less than man can share.

Were they as vain as gaudy-minded man,
 As flatulent with fumes of self-applause,

Their arts and conquests animals might boast, 240
 And claim their laurel crowns as well as we,

But not see. Here we stand alone ;
 As in our form, distinct, pre-eminent ;

If prone in thought, our stature is our shame ;
 And man should blush, his forehead meets the skies. 245

The visible and present are for brutes,
 A slender portion ! and a narrow bound !

These, Reason, with an energy divine,
 O'erleaps, and claims the future and unseen !

The vast unseen ! the future fathomless ! 250
 When

When the great soul buoys up to this high point,
 Leaving gross nature's sediments below,
 Then, and then only, Adam's offspring quits
 The sage and hero of the fields and woods,
 Asserts his rank, and rises into man.
 This is ambition : this is human fire.

255

Can parts or place (two bold pretenders!) make
 Lorenzo great, and pluck him from the throng?

Genius and art, ambition's boasted wings,
 Our boast but ill deserve. A feeble aid!
 Dedalian Engin'ry! If these alone
 Assist our flight, fame's flight is glory's fall.
 Heart-merit wanting, mount we ne'er so high,
 Our height is but the gibbet of our name.

260

A celebrated wretch when I behold,
 When I behold a genius bright, and base,
 Of tow'ring talents, and terrestrial aims;
 Methinks I see, as thrown from her high sphere,
 The glorious fragments of a soul immortal,
 With rubbish mix'd, and glitt'ring in the dust.

265

Struck at the splendid melancholy sight,
 At once compassion soft, and envy, rise——
 But wherefore envy? Talents angel-bright,
 If wanting worth, are shining instruments
 In false ambition's hand, to finish faults
 Illustrious, and give infamy renown.

270

275

Great ill is an atchievement of great pow'rs:
 Plain sense but rarely leads us far astray.

Reason the means, affections choose our end;
 Means have no merit, if our end amiss.

280

If wrong our hearts, our heads are right in vain;
 What is a Pelham's head to Pelham's heart!
 Hearts are proprietors of all applause.

Right ends and means make wisdom: Worldly-wise
 Is but half-witted, at its highest praise.

285

Let genius then despair to make thee great;
 Nor flatter station. What is station high?

'Tis a proud mendicant; it boasts, and begs;
 It begs an alms of homage from the throng,
 And oft the throng denies its charity.

290

Monarchs

Monarchs, and ministers, are awful names ;
 Whoever wear them, challenge our devoir.
 Religion, public order, both exact
 External homage, and a supple knee,
 To beings pompously set up, to serve 295
 The meanest slave ; all more is merit's due,
 Her sacred and inviolable right ;
 Nor ever paid the monarch, but the man.
 Our hearts ne'r bow but to superior worth ;
 Nor ever fail of their allegiance there. 300
 Fools, indeed, drop the man in their account,
 And vote the mantle into majesty.
 Let the small savage boast his silver fur ;
 His royal robe unborrow'd, and unbought,
 His own, descending fairly from his fires. 305
 Shall man be proud to wear his livery,
 And souls in ermine scorn a soul without ?
 Can place or lessen us, or aggrandize ?
 Pigmies are pigmies still, tho' perch'd on Alps ;
 And pyramids are pyramids in vales. 310
 Each man makes his own stature, builds himself :
 Virtue alone out-builds the pyramids ;
 Her monuments shall last, when Egypt's fall.
 Of these sure truths dost thou demand the cause ?
 The cause is lodg'd in immortality. 315
 Hear, and assent. Thy bosom burns for pow'r ;
 What station charms thee ? I'll install thee there ;
 'Tis thine. And art thou greater than before ?
 Then thou before wast something less than man.
 Has thy new post betray'd thee into pride ? 320
 That treach'rous pride betrays thy dignity ;
 That pride defames humanity, and calls
 The being mean, which staffs or strings can raise.
 That pride, like hooded hawks, in darkness soars,
 From blindness bold, and tow'ring to the skies. 325
 'Tis born of ignorance, which knows not man :
 An angel's second ; nor his second long.
 A Nero quitting his imperial throne,
 And courting glory from the tinkling string,
 But faintly shadows an immortal soul,

With empire's self, to pride, or rapture fir'd.
 If nobler motives minister no cure,
 Ev'n vanity forbids thee to be vain.

High worth is elevated place : 'Tis more ;
 It makes the post stand candidate for thee ; 335
 Makes more than monarchs, makes an honest man ;
 Tho' no exchequer it commands, 'tis wealth ;
 And tho' it wears no ribband, 'tis renown ;
 Renown, that would not quit thee, tho' disgrac'd,
 Nor leave thee pendent on a master's smile. 340
 Other ambition nature interdicts ;
 Nature proclaims it most absurd in man,
 By pointing at his origin, and end ;
 Milk and a swathe, at first his whole demand ;
 His whole domain, at last, a turf or stone ; 345
 To whom, between, a world may seem too small.

Souls truly great, dart forward on the wing
 Of just ambition, to the grand result,
 The curtain's fall ; there, see the buskin'd chief
 Unshod behind this momentary scene ; 350
 Reduc'd to his own stature, low or high,
 As vice, or virtue, sinks him, or sublimes ;
 And laugh at this fantastic mummery,
 This antic prelude of grotesque events,
 Where dwarfs are often stilted, and betray 355
 A littleness of soul by worlds o'er-run,
 And nations laid in blood. Dread sacrifice
 To Christian pride ! which had with horror shockt
 The darkest pagans, offer'd to their gods.

O thou most Christian enemy to peace ! 360
 Again in arms ? again provoking fate ?
 That prince, and that alone, is truly great,
 Who draws the sword reluctant, gladly sheaths !
 On empire builds what empire far outweighs,
 And makes his throne a scaffold to the skies. 365
 Why this so rare ? Because forgot of all
 The day of death ; that venerable day,
 Which sits as judge ; that day which shall pronounce
 On all our days, absolve them, or condemn.
 Lorenzo, never shut thy thought against it ; 370
 B

Be levees ne'er so full, afford it room,
 And give it audience in the cabinet.
 That friend consulted (flatteries apart)
 Will tell thee fair, if thou art great or mean.

To doat on aught may leave us, or be left, 375
 Is that ambition? Then let flames descend,

Point to the centre their inverted spires,
 And learn humiliation from a soul,
 Which boasts her lineage from celestial fire.

Yet these are they the world pronounces wise; 380
 The world, which cancels nature's right and wrong,
 And casts new wisdom: Ev'n the grave man lends
 His solemn face to countenance the coin.

Wisdom for parts is madness for the whole.
 This stamps the paradox, and gives us leave 385
 To call the wisest weak, the richest poor,

The most ambitious, unambitious, mean;
 In triumph, mean; and abject, on a throne.

Nothing can make it less than mad in man,
 To put forth all his ardour, all his art, 390
 And give his soul her full unbounded flight,

But reaching him, who gave her wings to fly.
 When blind ambition quite mistakes her road,

And downward pores, for that which shines above,
 Substantial happiness, and true renown; 395
 Then, like an idiot gazing on the brook,

We leap at stars, and fasten in the mud;
 At glory grasp, and sink in infamy.

Ambition! pow'rful source of good and ill!
 Thy strength in man, like length of wing in birds, 400
 When disengag'd from earth, with greater ease,

And swifter flight, transports us to the skies:
 By toys entangled, or in guilt bemir'd,

It turns a curse; it is our chain, and scourge,
 In this dark dungeon, where confin'd we lie, 405
 Close-grated by the sordid bars of sense;

All prospect of eternity shut out:
 And, but for execution, ne'er set free.

With error is ambition justly charg'd,
 Find we Lorenzo wiser in his wealth? 410
 What

What if thy rental I reform ; and draw
 An inventory new to set thee right ?
 Where, thy true treasure ? Gold says, ' not in me :'
 And, " not in me," the Diamond. Gold is poor ; 415
 India's insolvent : seek it in thyself,
 Seek in thy naked self, and find it there :
 In being so descended, form'd, endow'd ;
 Sky-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race !
 Erect, immortal, rational, divine !
 In senses, which inherit earth, and Heav'ns ; 420
 Enjoy the various riches nature yields ;
 Far nobler ; give the riches they enjoy ;
 Give taste to fruits, and harmony to groves ;
 Their radiant beams to gold, and gold's bright fire :
 Take in, at once, the landscape of the world, 425
 At a small inlet, which a grain might close,
 And half-create the wond'rous world they see.
 Our senses, as our reason, are divine.
 But for the magic organ's pow'rful charm,
 Earth were a rude, uncolour'd chaos, still. 430
 Objects are but th'occasion ! ours th'exploit ;
 Ours is the cloth, the pencil, and the paint,
 Which nature's admirable picture draws,
 And beautifies creation's ample dome.
 Like Milton's Eve, when gazing on the lake, 435
 Man makes the matchless image, man admires.
 Say then, shall man, his thoughts all sent abroad
 (Superior wonders in himself forgot)
 His admiration waste on objects round,
 When Heav'n makes him the soul of all he sees ? 440
 Absurd ! not rare ! so great, so mean, is man.
 What wealth in senses such as these ! What wealth
 In fancy, fir'd to form a fairer scene
 Than sense surveys ! In mem'ry's firm record,
 Which, should it perish, could this world recal 445
 From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years !
 In colours fresh, originally bright,
 Preserve its portrait, and report its fate !
 What wealth in intellect, that sov'reign pow'r !
 Which sense, and fancy, summons to the bar ; 450

Interrogates

Interrogates, approves, or reprehends ;
 And from the mass those underlings import,
 From their materials sifted and refin'd,
 And in truth's balance accurately weigh'd,
 Forms art, and science, government, and laws ; 455
 The solid basis, and the beauteous frame,
 The vitals and the grace of civil life !

And manners (sad exception !) set aside,
 Strikes out, with master-hand, a copy fair
 Of his idea, whose indulgent thought, 460
 Long, long, ere chaos teem'd, plann'd human blifs.

What wealth in souls that soar, dive, range around,
 Disdaining limit, or from place, or time ;
 And hear at once, in thought extensive, hear
 Th'almighty fiat, and the trumpet's sound ! 465
 Bold, on creation's outside walk, and view
 What was, and is, and more than e'er shall be ;
 Commanding, with omnipotence of thought,
 Creations new in fancy's field to rise !

Souls, that can grasp whate'er th'Almighty made, 470
 And wander wild thro' things impossible !
 What wealth, in faculties of endless growth,
 In quenchless passions violent to crave,
 In liberty to choose, in pow'r to reach,
 And in duration (how thy riches rise !) 475
 Duration to perpetuate—boundless blifs !

Ask you, what pow'r resides in feeble man
 That blifs to gain ? Is virtues, then, unknown ?
 Virtue, our present peace, our future prize.
 Man's unprecious, natural estate, 480
 Improveable at will, in virtue lies !
 Its tenure sure ; its income is divine.

High-built abundance, heap on heap ! for what ?
 To breed new wants and beggar us the more ;
 Then, make a richer scramble for the throng. 485
 Soon as this feeble pulse, which leaps so long
 Almost by miracle, is tir'd with play,
 Like rubbish from dislodging engines thrown,
 Our magazines of hoarded trifles fly ;
 Fly diverse ; fly to foreigners, to foes ; 490

New masters court, and call the former fools
 (How justly !) for dependence on their stay.
 Wide scatter, first, our play-things ; then, our dust.

Dost court abundance for the sake of peace ?
 Learn, and lament thy self-defeated scheme : 415

Riches enable to be richer still ;
 And, richer still, what mortal can resist ?
 Thus wealth (a cruel task-master !) enjoins
 New toils, succeeding toils, an endless train !
 And murders peace, which taught it first to shine. 500

The poor are half as wretched as the rich ;
 Whose proud and painful privilege it is,
 At once, to bear a double load of woe ;
 To feel the stings of envy, and of want,
 Outrageous want ! both Indies cannot cure. 505

A competence is vital to content.
 Much wealth is corpulence, if not disease ;
 Sick, or incumber'd, is our happiness.

A competence is all we can enjoy.
 O be content, where Heav'n can give no more ! 510

More, like a flash of water from a lock,
 Quickens our spirit's movement for an hour ;
 But soon its force is spent, nor rise our joys
 Above our native temper's common stream.
 Hence disappointment lurks in ev'ry prize, 515
 As bees in flow'rs, and stings us with success.

The rich man, who denies it, proudly feigns ;
 Nor knows the wise are privy to the lie.

Much learning shews how little mortals know ;
 Much wealth, how little worldlings can enjoy : 520

At best, it babies us with endless toys,
 And keeps us children till we drop to dust.

As monkeys at a mirror stand amaz'd,
 They fail to find what they so plainly see ;

Thus men, in shining riches, see the face 525
 Of happiness, nor know it is a shade,

But gaze, and touch, and peep, and peep again,
 And wish, and wonder it is absent still.

How few can rescue opulence from want !
 Who lives to Nature, rarely can be poor ; 530

Who

Who lives to Fancy, never can be rich.
 Poor is the man in debt ; the man of gold,
 In debt to Fortune, trembles at her pow'r.
 The man of reason smiles at her, and death.
 O what a patrimony this ! A being 535
 Of such inherent strength and majesty,
 Not worlds possess can raise it ; worlds destroy'd
 Can't iniure : which holds on its glorious course,
 When thine, O Nature ! ends ; too blest to mourn
 Creation's obsequies. What treasure this ; 540
 The monarch is a beggar to the man.

IMMORTAL ! Ages past, yet nothing gone !
 Morn without eve ! a race without a goal ;
 Unshorten'd by progression infinite !
 Futurity for ever future ! Life 545
 Beginning still, where computation ends !
 'Tis the description of a deity !
 'Tis the description of the meanest slave :
 The meanest slave dares then Lorenzo scorn ?
 The meanest slave thy sovereign glory shares. 550
 Proud youth ! fastidious of the lower world !
 Man's lawful pride includes humility ;
 Stoops to the lowest ; is too great to find
 Inferiors ; all immortal ! Brothers all !
 Proprietors eternal of thy love. 555

Immortal ! What can strike the sense so strong,
 As this the soul ? It thunders to the thought ;
 Reason amazes ; gratitude o'erwhelms ;
 No more we slumber on the brink of fate ;
 Rous'd at the sound, th'exulting soul ascends, 560
 And breathes her native air ; an air that feeds
 Ambitions high, and fans ethereal fires ;
 Quick-kindles all that is divine within us,
 Nor leaves one loit'ring thought beneath the stars.

Has not Lorenzo's bosom caught the flame ? 565
 Immortal ! Were but one immortal, how
 Would others envy ! How would thrones adore !
 Because 'tis common, is the blessing lost ?
 How this ties up the bounteous hand of Heav'n !
 O vain, vain, vain ! all else !—Eternity ! 570

A glorious, and a needful refuge, that
From vile imprisonment in abject views.

'Tis immortality, 'tis that alone,

Amid life's pains, abasements, emptiness,

The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill.

575

That only, and that amply, this performs ;

Lifts us above life's pains, her joys above ;

Their terror those ; and these their lustre lose ;

Eternity depending covers all ;

Eternity depending all achieves ;

580

Sets earth at distance ; casts her into shades ;

Blends her distinctions ; abrogates her pow'rs ;

The low, the lofty, joyous, and severe,

Fortune's dread frowns, and fascinating smiles,

Make one promiscuous and neglected heap

585

The man beneath ; if I may call him man,

Whom immortality's full force inspires.

Nothing terrestrial touches his high thought !

Suns shine unseen, and thunders roll unheard,

By minds quite conscious of their high descent,

590

Their present province, and their future prize ?

Divinely darting upward ev'ry wish,

Warm on the wing, in glorious absence lost.

Doubt you this truth ? Why labours your belief ?

If earth's whole orb, by some due distant eye

595

Were seen at once, her tow'ring Alps would sink,

And level'd Atlas leaves an even sphere.

Thus earth, and all that earthly minds admire,

Is swallow'd in Eternity's vast round.

To that stupendous view, when souls awake,

600

So large of late, so mountainous to man,

Time's toys subside ; and equal all below.

Enthusiastic, this ? then all are weak,

But rank enthusiasts. To this godlike height

Some souls have soar'd ; or martyrs ne'er had bled.

605

And all may do, what has by man been done.

Who, beaten by these sublunary storms,

Boundless, interminable joys can weigh,

Unraptur'd, unexalted, uninflam'd ?

What slave unblest, who from to-morrow's dawn

610

Expects

NIGHT THE SIXTH.

111

Expects an empire ? He forgets his chain,
And, thron'd in thought, his absent sceptre waves.

And what a sceptre waits us ! what a throne !

Her own immense appointments to compute,

Or comprehend her high prerogatives,

615

In this her dark minority, how toils,

How vainly pants the human soul divine !

Too great the bounty seems for earthly joy :

What heart but trembles at so strange a bliss ?

In spite of all the truths the muse has sung,

620

Ne'er to be priz'd enough ! enough revolv'd !

Are there who wrap the world so close about them,

They see no farther than the clouds ? and dance

On heedless Vanity's fantastic toe,

Till, stumbling at a straw, in their career,

625

Headlong they plunge, where end both dance and song ?

Are there, Lorenzo ? Is it possible ?

Are there on earth (let me not call them men)

Who lodge a soul immortal in their breasts ;

Unconscious as the mountain of its ore ;

630

Or rock, of its inestimable gem ?

When rocks shall melt, and mountains vanish, these

Shall know their treasure ; treasure, then, no more.

Are there (still more amazing !) who resist

The rising thought ? who smother, in its birth,

635

The glorious truth ? who struggle to be brutes ?

Who thro' this bosom-barrier burst their way ;

And, with revers'd ambition, strive to sink ?

Who labour downwards thro' th'opposing pow'rs

Of instinct, reason, and the world against them,

640

To dismal hopes, and shelter in the shock

Of endless Night ? Night darker than the grave !

Who fight the proofs of immortality ?

With horrid zeal, and execrable arts,

Work all their engines, level their black fires,

645

To blot from man this attribute divine,

(Than vital blood far dearer to the wise)

Blasphemers, and rank atheists to themselves ?

To contradict them, see all nature rise ;

What object, what event, the moon beneath,

650

But

But argues, or endears, an after-scene?
 To Reason proves, or weds it to Desire?
 All things proclaim it needful; some advance
 One precious step beyond, and prove it sure.
 A thousand arguments swarm round my pen,
 From Heav'n, and earth, and man.—Indulge a few,
 By nature, as her common habit, worn;
 So pressing Providence a truth to teach,
 Which truth untaught, all other truths were vain.
 THOU! whose all-providential eye surveys,
 Whose hand directs, whose spirit fills and warms
 Creation, and holds empire far beyond!
 Eternity's inhabitant august!
 Of two eternities amazing Lord!
 One past, ere man's, or angel's, had begun;
 Aid! while I rescue from the foe's assault
 Thy glorious immortality in man:
 A theme for ever, and for all, of weight,
 Of moment infinite! but relish'd most
 By those who love thee most, who most adore.
 Nature, thy daughter, ever-changing birth
 Of thee the great Immutable, to man
 Speaks wisdom; is his oracle supreme;
 And he who most consults her, is most wise.
 Lorenzo, to this heav'nly Delphos haste;
 And come back all-immortal; all divine:
 Look Nature thro', 'tis revolution all;
 All change, no death. Day follows night; and night
 The dying day; stars rise, and set, and rise;
 Earth takes th'example. See the Summer gay,
 With her green chaplet, and ambrosial flow'rs,
 Droops into pallid Autumn: Winter grey,
 Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
 Blows Autumn, and his golden fruits, away:
 Then melts into the Spring: Soft Spring, with breath
 Favonian, from warm chambers of the South,
 Recals the first. All, to reflowerish, fades.
 As in a wheel, all sinks, to reascend.
 Emblems of Man, who passes, not expires.
 With this minute distinction, emblems just,
 Nature

Nature revolves, but man advances ; both
 Eternal, that a circle, this a line ;
 That gravitates, this soars. Th'aspiring soul
 Ardent, and tremulous, like flame, ascends ;
 Zeal, and humility, her wings to Heav'n. 695
 The world of matter, with its various forms,
 All dies into new life. Life born from Death
 Rolls the vast mass, and shall for ever roll.
 No single atom, once in being, lost,
 With change of counsel charges the most High. 700

What hence infers Lorenzo ? Can it be ?
 Matter immortal ? And shall spirit die ?
 Above the nobler, shall less noble rise ?
 Shall man alone, for whom all else revives,
 No resurrection know ? Shall man alone, 705
 Imperial man ! be sown in barren ground,
 Less privileg'd than grain, on which he feeds ?
 Is man, in whom alone is pow'r to prize
 The bliss of being, or with previous pain
 Deplore its period, by the spleen of Fate, 710
 Severely doom'd Death's single unredeem'd ?

If Nature's revolution speaks aloud,
 In her gradation, hear her louder still.
 Look Nature thro', 'tis neat gradation all.
 By what minute degrees her scale ascends ! 715
 Each middle Nature join'd at each extreme,
 To that above it join'd, to that beneath.
 Parts, into parts reciprocally shot,
 Abhor divorce : What love of union reigns !
 Here, dormant matter waits a call to life : 720
 Half-life, half-death, join there ; here, life and sense ;
 There, sense from reason steals a glimm'ring ray ;
 Reason shines out in man. But how preserv'd
 The chain unbroken upward, to the realms
 Of incorporeal life ? those realms of bliss, 725
 Where Death hath no dominion ? Grant a make
 Half-mortal, half-immortal ; earthy, part ;
 And part ethereal ; grant the soul of man
 Eternal ; or in man the series ends.
 Wide yawns the gap ; connexion is no more ; 730

Checkt

Checkt Reason halts ; her next step wants support ;
 Striving to climb, she tumbles from her scheme ;
 A scheme Analogy pronounc'd so true ;
 Analogy, man's surest guide below.

Thus far, all Nature calls on thy belief.

735

And will Lorenzo, careless of the call,
 False attestation on all nature charge,
 Rather than violate his league with Death ?
 Renounce his reason, rather than renounce
 The dust below'd, and run the risk of Heav'n ?

740

O what indignity to deathless souls !

What treason to the majesty of man !

Of man immortal ! Hear the lofty style :

" If so decreed, th' Almighty will be done.

" Let earth dissolve, yon pond'rous orbs descend,

745

" And grind us into dust : The soul is safe ;

" The man emerges ; mounts above the wreck,

" As tow'ring flame from Nature's fun'ral pyre :

" O'er devastation, as a gainer, smiles ;

" His charter, his inviolable rights,

750

" Well-pleas'd to learn from Thunder's impotence,

" Death's pointless darts, and Hell's defeated storms."

But these chimeras touch not thee, Lorenzo !

The glories of the world, thy sev'nfold shield.

Other ambition than of crowns in air,

755

And superlunary felicities,

Thy bosom warm. I'll cool it, if I can ;

And turn those glories that enchant, against thee.

What ties thee to this life, proclaims the next.

If wise, the cause that wounds thee is thy cure.

760

Come, my ambitious ! let us mount together

(To mount Lorenzo never can refuse) ;

And from the clouds, where Pride delights to dwell,

Look down on earth. What seest thou ; Wond'rous things !

Terrestrial wonders, that eclipse the skies.

765

What lengths of labour'd lands ! what loaded seas !

Loaded by men, for pleasure, wealth, or war !

Seas, winds, and planets, into service brought,

His art acknowledge, and promote his ends.

Nor can th'eternal rocks his will withstand ;

770

What

NIGHT THE SIXTH.

115

What level'd mountains ! And what lifted vales !
O'er vales and mountains sumptuous cities swell,
And gild our landscape with their glitt'ring spires.
Some mid the wand'ring waves majestic rise ;
And Neptune holds a mirror to their charms. 775
Far greater still ! (what cannot mortal might ?)

See wide dominions ravish'd from the deep !
The narrow'd deep with indignation foams.
Or southward turn, to delicate, and grand ;
The finer arts there ripen in the sun. 780

How the tall temples, as to meet their gods,
Ascend the skies ! the proud triumphal arch
Shews us half Heav'n beneath its ample bend,
High thro' mid air, here, streams are taught to flow ;
Whole rivers, there, lay'd by in basons, sleep, 785
Here, plains turn oceans ; there vast oceans join
Thro' kingdoms channel'd deep from shore to shore ;
And chang'd Creation takes its face from man.

Beats thy brave breast for formidable scenes,
Where fame and empire wait upon the sword ; 790
See fields in blood ; here naval thunders rise ;
Britannia's voice ! that awes the world to peace.

How yon enormous mole projecting breaks
The mid-sea furious waves ! their roar amidst,
Out-speaks the Deity, and says, " O main ! 795
" Thus far, nor farther ; new restraints obey."

Earth's disembowel'd ! measur'd are the skies !
Stars are detect'd in their deep recess !
Creation widens ! vanquish'd Nature yields !
Her secrets are extorted ! Art prevails ! 800

What monument of genius, spirit, pow'r !
And now, Lorenzo, raptur'd at this scene,
Whose glories render Heav'n superfluous ! say,
Whose footsteps these ?—Immortals have been here.
Could less than souls immortal this have done ? 805

Earth's cover'd o'er with proofs of souls immortal ;
And proofs of immortality forgot.

To flatter thy grand foible, I confess,
These are Ambition's works : and these are great :
But this, the least immortal souls can do : 810

Transcend

Transcend them all.—But what can these transcend ?
Dost ask me, What ?—One sigh for the distressed.
What then for infidels ? A deeper sigh.
'Tis moral grandeur makes the mighty man ;
How little they, who think aught great below !
All our ambitions Death defeats, but one ;
And that it crowns. —Here cease we : But, ere long,
More pow'rful proof shall take the field against thee,
Stronger than Death, and smiling at the tomb.

815

End of Night the Sixth.

THE
COMPLAINT.

BEING THE SECOND PART OF
THE INFIDEL RECLAIMED.

Containing the
Nature, Proof, and Importance, of Immortality.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

HEAV'N gives the needful, but neglected, call.
What day, what hour, but knocks at human hearts,
To wake the soul to sense of future scenes ?
Deaths stand, like Mercuries, in ev'ry way ;
And kindly points us to our journey's end. 5
Pope, who couldst make immortals ; art thou dead ?
I give thee joy : nor will I take my leave ;
So soon to follow. Man but dives in death ;
Dives from the sun, in fairer day to rise ;
The grave, his subterranean road to bliss. 10
Yes, infinite indulgence plann'd it so ;
Thro' various parts our glorious story runs ;
Time gives the preface, endless age unrolls
The volume (ne'er unroll'd) of human fate.

This

This, earth and skies * already have proclaim'd. 15
 The world's a prophecy of worlds to come ;
 And who, what God foretels (who speak in things,
 Still louder than in words) shall dare deny ?
 If nature's arguments appear too weak,
 Turn a new leaf, and stronger read in man. 20
 If man sleeps on, untaught by what he sees,
 Can he prove infidel to what he feels ?
 He, whose blind thought futurity denies,
 Unconscious bears, Bellerophon ! like thee,
 His own indictment ; he condemns himself ; 25
 Who reads his bosom, reads immortal life ;
 Or, nature, there, imposing on her sons,
 Has written fables ; man was made a lie.
 Why discontent for ever harbour'd there ?
 Incurable consumption of our peace ! 30
 Resolve me, why, the cottager, and king,
 He whom sea-fever'd realms obey, and he
 Who steals his whole dominion from the waste,
 Repelling winter blasts with mud and straw,
 Disquieted alike, draw sigh for sigh, 35
 In fate so distant, in complaint so near ?
 Is it, that things terrestrial can't content ?
 Deep in rich pasture, will thy flocks complain ?
 Not so ; but to their master is deny'd
 To share their sweet serene. Man, ill at ease, 40
 In this, not his own place, this foreign field,
 Where nature fodders him with other food
 Than was ordain'd his cravings to suffice,
 Poor in abundance, famish'd at a feast,
 Sighs on for something more, when most enjoy'd. 45
 Is Heav'n then kinder to thy flocks than thee ;
 Not so ; thy pasture richer, but remote ;
 In part, remote ; for that remoter part
 Man bleats from instinct, tho', perhaps, debauch'd
 By sense, his reason sleeps, nor dreams the cause. 50
 The cause how obvious, when his reason wakes !

• Night the Sixth.

His grief is but his grandeur in disguise ;
And discontent is immortality.

Shall sons of æther, shall the blood of Heav'n,
Set up their hopes on earth, and stable here,
With brutal acquiescence in the mire ?
Lorenzo, no ! they shall be nobly pain'd ;
The glorious foreigners, distressed, shall sigh
On thrones ; and thou congratulate the sigh :
Man's misery declares him born for bliss :
His anxious heart asserts the truth I sing,
And gives the Sceptic in his head the lie.

55

Our heads, our hearts, our passions, and our pow'rs,
Speak the same language ! call us to the skies :
Unripen'd these in this inclement clime,
Scarce rise above conjecture, and mistake ;
And for this land of trifles those too strong
Tumultuous rise, and tempest human life :
What prize on earth can pay us for the storm ?
Meet objects for our passions Heav'n ordain'd,
Objects that challenge all their fire, and leave
No fault, but in defect : blest Heav'n ! avert
A bounded ardour for unbounded bliss ;
O for a bliss unbounded ! far beneath
A soul immortal, is a mortal joy.
Nor are our pow'rs to perish immature ;
But, after feeble effort here, beneath
A brighter sun, and in a nobler soil,
Transplanted from this sublunary bed,
Shall flourish fair, and put forth all their bloom.

65

70

75

80

Reason progressive, instinct is complete ;
Swift instinct leaps ; slow reason feebly climbs.
Brutes soon their zenith reach ; their little all
Flows in at once ; in ages they no more
Could know, or do, or covet, or enjoy.
Were man to live coeval with the sun,
The patriarch pupil would be learning still ;
Yet, dying, leave his lesson half-unlearn't.
Men perish in advance, as if the sun
Should set ere noon, in eastern oceans drown'd ;
If fit, with dim, illustrious to compare,

85

90

The sun's meridian, with the soul of man.
 To man, why, step-dame Nature ! so severe ?
 Why thrown aside thy master-piece half-wrought,
 While meaner efforts thy last hand enjoy ? 95
 Or, if abortively poor man must die,
 Nor reach, what reach he might, why die in dread ?
 Why curst with foresight ? Wise to misery ?
 Why of his proud prerogative the prey ?
 Why less pre-eminent in rank, than pain ? 100
 His immortality alone can tell ;
 Full ample fund to balance all amiss,
 And turn the scale in favour of the just !
 His immortality alone can solve
 That darkest of enigmas, human hope ; 105
 Of all the darkest, if at death we die.
 Hope, eager hope, th'assassin of our joy,
 All present blessings treading under-foot,
 Is scarce a milder tyrant than despair.
 With no past toils content, still planning new, 110
 Hope turns us o'er to death alone for ease.
 Possession, why, more tasteless than pursuit ?
 Why is a wish far dearer than a crown ?
 That wish accomplish'd, why, the grave of bliss ?
 Because, in the great future bury'd deep, 115
 Beyond our plans of empire and renown,
 Lies all that man with ardour should pursue ;
 And HE who made him, bent him to the right.
 Man's heart th'Almighty to the future sets,
 By secret and inviolable springs ; 120
 And makes his hope his sublunary joy.
 Man's heart eats all things, and is hungry still ;
 " More, more ! " the glutton cries : for something new
 So rages appetite, if man can't mount,
 He will descend. He starves on the possess. 125
 Hence, the world's master, from ambition's spire,
 In Caprea plung'd ; and div'd beneath the brute.
 In that rank styè why wallow'd empire's son
 Supreme ? Because he could no higher fly ;
 His riot was ambition in despair. 130
 O. d

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

121

Old Rome consulted birds ; Lorenzo ! thou,
With more success, the flight of hope survey ;
Of restless hope, for ever on the wing,
High perch'd o'er ev'ry thought that falcon sits,
To fly at all that rises in her sight ;
And, never stooping, but to mount again
Next moment, she betrays her aim's mistake,
And owns her quarry lodg'd beyond the grave.

135

There should it fail us (it must fail us there,
If being fails) more mournful riddles rise,
And virtue vies with hope in mystery.

140

Why virtue ? Where its praise, its being fled !
Virtue is true self-interest pursu'd :

What true self-interest of quite-mortal man ?
To close with all that makes him happy here.

145

If vice (as sometimes) is our friend on earth,
Then vice is virtue ; 'tis our sov'reign good.

In self-applause is virtue's golden prize ;
No self-applause attends it on thy scheme :

Whence self-applause ? From conscience of the right.
And what is right, but means of happiness ?

150

No means of happiness when virtue yields ;
That basis failing, falls the building too,

And lays in ruin ev'ry virtuous joy.

The rigid guardian of a blameless heart,
So long rever'd so long reputed wise,

155

Is weak ; with rank knight-errantries o'er-run.
Why beats thy bosom with illustrious dreams

Of self-exposure, laudable, and great ?

Of gallant enterprize, and glorious death ?

160

Die for thy country ?—Thou romantic fool !

Seize, seize the plank thyself, and let her sink :

Thy country ! what to thee ?—The Godhead ; what ?

(I speak with awe !) tho' he should bid thee bleed ?

If, with thy blood, thy final hope is spilt,

165

Nor can Omnipotence reward the blow ;

Be deaf ; preserve thy being ; disobey.

Nor is it disobedience : know, Lorenzo !

Whate'er th' Almighty's subsequent command,

His first command is this :—"Man, love thyself."

170

In this alone, free agents are not free.
 Existence is the basis, bliss the prize ;
 If virtue costs existence, 'tis a crime ;
 Bold violation of our law supreme,
 Black suicide ; thro' nations, which consult
 Their gain, at thy expence, resound applause.

175

Since virtue's recompence is doubtful, here,
 If man dies wholly, well may we demand,
 Why is man suffer'd to be good in vain ?
 Why to be good in vain, is man enjoin'd ?
 Why to be good in vain, is man betray'd ?
 Betray'd by traitors lodg'd in his own breast,
 By sweet complacencies from virtue felt ?
 Why whispers Nature lies on Virtue's part ?
 Or if blind instinct (which assumes the name
 Of sacred conscience) plays the fool in man,
 Why reason made accomplice in the cheat ?
 Why are the wisest loudest in her praise ?
 Can man by reason's beam be led astray ?

180

185

Or, at his peril, imitate his God ?
 Since virtue sometimes ruins us on earth,
 Or both are true ; or, man survives the grave.

190

Or man survives the grave, or own, Lorenzo,
 Thy boast supreme, a wild absurdity.
 Dauntless thy spirit ; cowards are thy scorn.
 Grant man immortal, and thy scorn is just.
 The man immortal, rationally brave,
 Dares rush on death—because he cannot die.
 But if man loses all, when life is lost,
 He lives a coward, or a fool expires.

195

200

A daring infidel (and such there are,
 From pride, example, lucre, rage, revenge,
 Or pure heroical defect of thought)
 Of all earth's madmen, most deserves a chain.

When to the grave we follow the renown'd
 For valour, virtue, science, all we love,
 And all we praise ; for worth, whose moon-tide beam,
 Enabling us to think in higher style,
 Mends our ideas of ethereal pow'rs ;
 Dream we, that lustre of the moral world

205

210
Goes

Goes out in stench, and rottenness the close?
 Why was he wise to know, and warm to praise,
 And strenuous to transcribe in human life,
 The mind Almighty? could it be, that fate,
 Just when the lineaments begin to shine, 215
 And dawn the DEITY, should snatch the draught,
 With night eternal blot it out, and give
 The skies alarm, lest angels too might die?

If human souls, why not angelic too
 Extinguish'd? and a solitary God, 220
 O'er ghastly ruin, frowning from his throne?
 Shall we this moment gaze on God in man?
 The next, lose man for ever in the dust?
 From dust we disengage, or man mistakes;
 And there, where least his judgment fears a flaw, 225
 Wisdom and worth, how boldly he commends!
 Wisdom and worth, are sacred names; rever'd,
 Where not embrac'd; applauded! deify'd!
 Why not compassion'd too? If spirits die,
 Both are calamities, inflicted both 230
 To make us but more wretched: wisdom's eye
 Acute, for what? To spy more miseries;
 And worth so recompens'd, new points their stings.
 Or man surmounts the grave, or gain is loss,
 And worth exalted humbles us the more. 235
 Thou wilt not patronize a scheme that makes
 Weakness, and vice, the refuge of mankind.

"Has virtue, then, no joys?"—Yes, joys dear-bought;
 Talk ne'er so long, in this imperfect state,
 Virtue, and vice, are at eternal war. 240
 Virtue's a combat; and who fights for nought?
 Or for precarious, or for small reward?
 Who virtue's self-reward so loud resound,
 Would take degrees angelic here below,
 And virtue, while they compliment, betray, 245
 By feeble motives, and unfaithful guards.
 The crown, th'unfading crown, her soul inspires:
 'Tis that, and that alone, can countervail
 The body's treach'ries, and the world's assaults:
 On earth's poor pay our famish'd virtue dies. 250

Truth incontestable ! In spite of all
A Bayle has preach'd, or a V——e believ'd.

In man the more we dive, the more we see
Heav'n's signet stamping an immortal make.
Dive to the bottom of his soul, the base
Sustaining all ; what find we ? Knowledge, love.

255

As light, and heat, essential to the sun,
These to the soul. And why, if souls expire ?

How little lovely here ? How little known ?

Small knowledge we dig up with endless toil !

260

And love unfeign'd may purchase perfect hate.

Why starv'd, on earth, our angel-appetites ;

While brutal are indulg'd their fulsome fill ?

Where then capacities divine conferr'd

As a mock diadem, in savage sport,

265

Rank insult of our pompous poverty,

Which reaps but pain, from seeming claims so fair ?

In future age lies no redress ? And shuts

Eternity the door on our complaint ?

If so, for what strange ends were mortals made !

270

The worst to wallow, and the best to weep ;

The man who merits most, must most complain.

Can we conceive a disregard in Heav'n,

What the worst perpetrate, or best endure ?

This cannot be. To love, and know, in man

275

Is boundless appetite, and boundless pow'r :

And these demonstrate boundless objects too.

Objects, pow'rs, appetites, Heav'n suits in all ;

Nor, nature thro', e'er violates this sweet,

Eternal concord, on her tuneful strings

280

Is man the sole exception from her laws ?

Eternity struck off from human hope,

(I speak with truth, but veneration too)

Man is a monster, the reproach of Heav'n,

A stain, a dark impenetrable cloud

285

On nature's beauteous aspect ; and deforms,

(Amazing blot !) deforms her with her lord.

If such is man's allotment, what is Heav'n ?

Or own the soul immortal, or blaspheme.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

125

Or own the soul immortal, or invert
 All order. Go, mock-majesty ! go, ma !
 And bow to thy superiors of the stall ;
 Thro' ev'ry scene of sense superior far :
 They graze the turf untill'd ; they drink the stream
 Unbrew'd, and ever full, and un-embitter'd
 With doubts, fears, fruitless hopes, regrets, despairs ?
 Mankind's peculiar ! Reason's precious dow'r !
 No foreign clime they ransack for their robes ;
 Nor brothers cite to the litigious bar ;
 Their good is good intire, unmix'd, unmarr'd ;
 They find a paradise in ev'ry field,
 On boughs forbidden where no curses hang ;
 Their ill, no more than strikes the sense ; unstretcht
 By previous dread, or murmur in the rear :
 When the worst comes, it comes unfear'd ; one stroke
 Begins, and ends, their woe : they die but once ;
 Blest, incommunicable privilege ! for which
 Proud man, who rules the globe, and reads the stars,
 Philosopher, or hero, sighs in vain.
 Account for this prerogative in brutes.
 No day, no glimpse of day, to solve the knot,
 But what beams on it from eternity.
 O sole and sweet solution ! That unties
 The difficult, and softens the severe ;
 The cloud on nature's beauteous face dispels :
 Restores bright order ; casts the brute beneath ;
 And re-inthrones us in supremacy
 Of joy, ev'n here : admit immortal life,
 And virtue is knight-errantry no more ;
 Each virtue brings in hand a golden dow'r,
 Far richer in reversion : hope exults :
 And tho' much bitter in our cup is thrown,
 Predominates, and gives the taste of Heav'n.
 O wherefore is the DEITY so kind ?
 Astonishing beyond astonishment !
 Heav'n our reward—for Heav'n enjoy'd below.
 Still unsubdu'd thy stubborn heart ?—For there
 The traitor lurks, who doubts the truths I sing.
 Reason is guiltless ; Will alone rebels.

290

295

300

305

310

315

320

325

What, in that stubborn heart, if I should find,
New, unexpected witnesses against thee? 330

Ambition, pleasure, and the love of gain!
Canst thou suspect, that these, which make the soul
The slave of earth, should own her heir of Heav'n?
Canst thou suspect what makes us disbelieve 335
Our immortality, should prove it sure?

First, then, Ambition summon to the bar.
Ambition's shame, Extravagance, Disgust,
And inextinguishable Nature, speak.
Each much depose; hear them in their turn. 340

Thy soul, how passionately fond of fame!
How anxious that fond passion to conceal!
We blush, detected in designs on praise,
'Tho' for best deeds, and from the best of men;
And why? Because immortal. Art divine 345
Has made the body tutor to the soul:

Heav'n kindly gives our blood a moral flow;
Bids it ascend the glowing cheek, and there
Upbraid that little heart's inglorious aim,
Which stoops to court a character from man; 350
While o'er us, in tremendous judgments sit
Far more than man, with endless praise and blame.

Ambition's boundless appetite out-speaks
The verdict of its shame. When souls take fire
At high presumptions of their own desert, 355
One age is poor applause; the mighty shout,
The thunder by the living few begun,
Late time must echo; worlds unborn, resound.

We wish our names eternally to live:
Wild dream! which ne'er had haunted human thought, 360
Had not our natures been eternal too.

Instinct points out an int'rest in hereafter;
But our blind reason sees not where it lies;
Or seeing, gives the substance for the shade.

Fame is the shade of immortality, 365
And in itself a shadow. Soon as caught,
Contemn'd; it shrinks to nothing in the grasp.
Consult th'ambitious, 'tis ambition's cure.

"And is this all?" cry'd Cæsar at his height,

Disgusted.

'Disgusted. This third proof ambition brings 370
 Of immortality. The first in fame,
 Observe him near, your envy will abate :
 Sham'd at the disproportion vast, between
 The passion and the purchase he will sigh
 At such success, and blush at his renown. 375
 And why ? Because far richer prize invites
 His heart ; far more illustrious glory calls ;
 It calls in whispers, yet the deafest hear.
 And can ambition a fourth proof supply ?
 It can, and stronger than the former three ; 380
 Yet quite o'erlook'd by some reputed wise.
 Tho' disappointments in ambition pain,
 And tho' success disgusts ; yet still, Lorenzo !
 In vain we strive to pluck it from our hearts ;
 By nature planted for the noblest ends. 385
 Absurd the fam'd advice to Pyrrhus giv'n,
 More prais'd than ponder'd ; specious, but unsound :
 Sooner that hero's sword the world had quell'd,
 Than reason, his ambition. Man must soar.
 An obstinate activity within, 390
 An insuppressive spring, will toss him up,
 In spite of fortune's load. Not kings alone,
 Each villager has his ambition too ;
 No Sultan prouder than his fetter'd slave :
 Slaves build their little Babylons of straw, 395
 Echo the proud Assyrian, in their hearts,
 And cry,—" Behold the wonders of my might !"
 And why ? Because immortal as their Lord ;
 And souls immortal must for ever heave
 At something great ; the glitter, or the gold ; 400
 The praise of mortals, or the praise of Heav'n.
 Nor absolutely vain is human praise,
 When human is supported by divine.
 I'll introduce Lorenzo to himself :
 Pleasure and Pride (bad masters !) share our hearts. 405
 As love of pleasure is ordain'd to guard
 And feed our bodies, and extend our race ;
 The love of praise is planted to protect
 And propagate the glories of the mind.

What is it, but the love of praise, inspires, 410
 Matures, refines, embellishes, exalts,
 Earth's happiness? From that, the delicate,
 The grand, the marvellous, of civil life.
 Want and convenience, under-workers, lay
 The basis, on which love of glory builds. 415
 Nor is thy life, O virtue! less in debt
 To praise, thy secret stimulating friend.
 Were men not proud, what merit should we miss!
 Pride made the virtues of the pagan world.
 Praise is the salt that seasons right to man, 420
 And whets his appetite for moral good.
 Thirst of applause is virtue's second guard;
 Reason, her first; but reason wants an aid:
 Our private reason is a flatterer;
 Thirst of applause calls public judgment in, 425
 To poise our own, to keep an even scale,
 And give endanger'd virtue fairer play.
 Here a fifth proof arises, stronger still:
 Why this so nice construction of our hearts;
 These delicate moralities of sense; 430
 This constitutional reserve of aid
 To succour virtue, when our reason fails;
 If virtue, kept alive by care and toil,
 And, oft, the mark of injuries on earth,
 When labour'd to maturity (its bill 435
 Of disciplines, and pain, unpaid) must die?
 Why freighted rich to dash against a rock?
 Were men to perish when most fit to live,
 O how mis-spent were all these stratagems,
 By skill divine inwoven in our frame? 440
 Where are Heav'n's holiness and mercy fled?
 Laughs Heav'n, at once, at virtue, and at man?
 If not, why that discourag'd, this destroy'd?
 Thus far ambition. What says avarice?
 This her chief maxim, which has long been thine: 445
 "The wise and wealthy are the same."—I grant it:
 To store up treasure, with incessant toil,
 This is man's province, this his highest praise.
 To this great end keen instinct stings him on.

To

To guide that instinct, reason ! is thy charge ; 450

'Tis thine to tell us where true treasure lies :

But, reason failing to discharge her trust,

Or to the deaf discharging it in vain,

A blunder follows ; and blind industry,

Gall'd by the spur, but stranger to the course, 455

(The course where stakes of more than gold are won)

O'erloading, with the cares of distant age,

The jaded spirits of the present hour,

Provides for an eternity below.

" Thou shalt not covet," is a wise command ; 460

But bounded to the wealth the sun surveys :

Look farther, the command stands quite revers'd,

And av'rice is a virtue most divine.

Is faith a refuge for our happiness ?

Most sure : And is it not for reason too ? 465

Nothing this world unriddles, but the next.

Whence inextinguishable thirst of gain ?

From inextinguishable life in man :

Man, if not meant, by worth, to reach the skies,

Had wanted wing to fly so far in guilt. 470

Sour grapes, I grant, ambition, avarice :

Yet still their root is immortality.

These its wild growths so bitter, and so base,

(Pain, and reproach !) religion can reclaim,

Refine, exalt, throw down their pois'nous lee, 475

And make them sparkle in the bowl of bliss.

See the third witness laughs at bliss remote,

And falsely promises an Eden here :

Truth she shall speak for once, tho' prone to lie,

A common cheat, and pleasure is her name. 480

To pleasure never was Lorenzo deaf ;

Then hear her now, now first thy real friend.

Since nature made us not more fond than proud

Of happiness (whence hypocrites in joy !

Makers of mirth ! artificers of smiles !) 485

Why should the joy most poignant sense affords,

Burn us with blushes, and rebuke our pride ?—

Those Heav'n-born blushes tell us man descends,

Ev'n in the zenith of his earthly bliss :

Should reason take her infidel repose, 490
 This honest instinct speaks our lineage high ;
 This instinct calls on darkness to conceal
 Our rapturous relation to the stalls.
 Our glory covers us with noble shame,
 And he that's unconfounded, is unmann'd. 495
 The man that blushes is not quite a brute.
 Thus far with thee, Lorenzo, will I close !
 Pleasure is good, and man for pleasure made ;
 But pleasure full of glory, and of joy ;
 Pleasure, which neither blushes, nor expires. 500
 The witnesses are heard ; the cause is o'er ;
 Let conscience file the sentence in her court,
 Dearer than deeds that half a realm convey :
 Thus, seal'd by truth, th'authentic record runs :
 " Know all ; know infidels—unapt to know ; 505
 " 'Tis immortality your nature solves ;
 " 'Tis immortality decyphers man,
 " And opens all the myst'ries of his make.
 " Without it, half his instincts are a riddle ;
 " Without it, all his virtues are a dream. 510
 " His very crimes attest his dignity ;
 " His fateless thirst of pleasure, gold, and fame,
 " Declares him born for blessings infinite ;
 " What less than infinite, makes un-absurd
 " Passions, which all on earth but more inflames ? 515
 " Fierce passions, so mismeasur'd to this scene,
 " Stretch'd out, like eagles wings, beyond our nest,
 " Far, far beyond the worth of all below,
 " For earth too large, presage a nobler flight,
 " And evidence our title to the skies." 520
 Ye gentle theologues, of calmer kind !
 Whose constitution dictates to your pen,
 Who, cold yourselves, think ardour comes from hell !
 Think not our passions from corruption sprung,
 Tho' to corruption now they lend their wings ; 525
 That is their mistress, not their mother. All
 (And justly) reason deem divine : I see,
 I feel a grandeur in the passions too,
 Which speaks their high descent, and glorious end ;

Which

Which speaks them rays of an eternal fire. 530
 In paradise itself they burnt as strong,
 Ere Adam fell ; tho' wiser in their aim.
 Like the proud eastern, struck by Providence,
 What tho' our passions are run mad, and stoop
 With low, terrestrial appetite, to graze 535
 On trash, on toys, dethron'd from high desire ?
 Yet still, thro' their disgrace, a feeble ray
 Of greatness shines, and tells us whence they fell :
 But these (like that fall'n monarch when reclaim'd)
 When reason moderates the rein aright, 540
 Shall re-ascend, remount their former sphere,
 Where once they soar'd illustrious ; ere seduc'd
 By wanton Eve's debauch, to stroll on earth,
 And set the sublunary world on fire.

But grant their frenzy lasts ; their frenzy fails. 545
 To disappoint one providential end,
 For which Heav'n blew up ardour in our hearts :
 Were reason silent, boundless passion speaks
 A future scene of boundless objects too,
 And brings glad tidings of eternal day. 550
 Eternal day ! 'Tis that enlightens all :
 And all, by that enlighten'd, proves it sure.
 Consider man as an immortal being,
 Intelligible all ; and all is great :
 A crystalline transparency prevails, 555
 And strikes full lustre thro' the human sphere :
 Consider man as mortal, all is dark,
 And wretched ; reason weeps at the survey.

The learn'd Lorenzo cries, " And let her weep,
 " Weak, modern reason : ancient times were wise. 560
 " Authority, that venerable guide,
 " Stands on my part, the fam'd Athenian porch
 " (And who for wisdom so renown'd as they ?)
 " Deny'd this immortality to man."
 I grant it ; but affirm, they prov'd it too. 565
 A riddle this ! —Have patience ; I'll explain.
 What noble vanities, what moral flights,
 Glitt'ring thro' their romantic wisdom's page,
 Make us, at once, despise them, and admire !

Fable is flat to these high-season'd fires ; 570
They leave th'extravagance of song below.

"Flesh shall not feel ; or, feeling, shall enjoy

"The dagger or the rack ; to them, alike

"A bed of roses, or the burning bull."

In men exploding all beyond the grave, 575
Strange doctrine, this !—As doctrine, it was strange ;

But not, as prophecy : for such it prov'd,

And, to their own amazement, was fulfill'd :

They feign'd a firmness Christians need not feign.

The Christian truly triumph'd in the flame : 580

The Stoic saw, in double wonder lost,

Wonder at them, and wonder at himself,

To find the bold adventures of his thought

Not bold, and that he strove to lie in vain.

Whence, then, those thoughts ? those tow'ring thoughts, 585
that flew

Such monstrous heights ?—From instinct, and from pride.

The glorious instinct of a deathless soul,

Confus'dly conscious of her dignity,

Suggested truths they could not understand.

In lust's dominion, and in passion's storm, 590

Truth's system broken, scatter'd fragments lay,

(As light in chaos, glimm'ring thro' the gloom :)

Smit with the pomp of lofty sentiments,

Pleas'd pride proclaim'd, what reason disbeliev'd.

Pride, like the Delphic priestess, with a swell, 595

Rav'd nonsense, destin'd to be future sense,

When life immortal, in full day should shine ;

And death's dark shadows fly the gospel sun.

They spoke, what nothing but immortal souls

Could speak : and thus the truth they question'd prov'd. 600

Can then absurdities, as well as crimes,

Speak man immortal ? All things speak him so.

Much has been urg'd ; and dost thou call for more ?

Call ; and with endless questions be distress'd,

All unresolvable, if earth is all. 605

"Why life, a moment ? Infinite, desire ?

"Our wish, eternity ? Our home, the grave ?

"Heav'n's promise dormant lies in human hope ;

Who

- " Who wishes life immortal, proves it too.
 " Why happiness pursu'd, tho' never found ? 610
 " Man's thirst of happiness declares it is
 " (For nature never gravitates to nought)
 " That thirst unquench'd declares it is not here.
 " My Lucia, thy Clarissa, call to thought :
 " Why cordial friendship rivetted so deep, 615
 " As hearts to pierce at first, at parting, rend,
 " If friend, and friendship, vanish in an hour ?
 " Is not this torment in the mask of joy ?
 " Why by reflection marr'd, the joys of sense ?
 " Why past, and future, preying on our hearts, 620
 " And putting all our present joys to death ?
 " Why labours reason ? Instinct were as well ;
 " Instinct, far better ; what can choose, can err :
 " O how infallible the thoughtless brute !
 " 'Twere well his holiness were half as sure. 625
 " Reason with inclination why at war ?
 " Why sense of guilt ? Why conscience up in arms ?"
 Conscience of guilt, is prophecy of pain,
 And bosom-counsel to decline the blow.
 Reason with inclination ne'er had jarr'd, 630
 If nothing future paid forbearance here.
 Thus on—these, and a thousand pleas uncall'd,
 All promise, some ensure, a second scene ;
 Which, were it doubtful, would be dearer far
 Than all things else most certain ; were it false, 635
 What truth on earth so precious as the lie ?
 This world it gives us, let what will ensue ;
 This world it gives, in that high cordial, hope :
 The future of the present is the soul :
 How this life groans, when sever'd from the next ! 640
 Poor, mutilated wretch, that disbelieves !
 By dark distrust his being cut in two,
 In both parts perishes ; life void of joy,
 Sad prelude of eternity in pain !
 Couldst thou persuade me, the next life could fail 645
 Our ardent wishes ; how should I pour out
 My bleeding heart in anguish, new, as deep !
 Oh ! with what thoughts, thy hope, and my despair
 Abhorr'd

Abhor'd ANNIHILATION ! blasts the soul,
 And wide-extends the bounds of human woe !
 Could I believe Lorenzo's system true,
 In this black channel would my ravings run.

659

“ Grief from the future borrow'd peace, e'er-while
 “ The future vanish'd ! and the present pain'd !
 “ Strange import of unprecedented ill !
 “ Fall, how profound ! like Lucifer's, the fall :
 “ Unequal fate ! his fall, without his guilt !
 “ From where fond hope built her pavilion high,
 “ The gods among, hurl'd headlong, hurl'd at once
 “ To night ! to nothing ! Darker still than night.
 “ If 'twas a dream, why wake me, my worst foe ?
 “ Lorenzo ! boastful of the name of friend !
 “ O for delusion ! O for error still !
 “ Could vengeance strike much stronger than to plant
 “ A thinking being in a world like this,
 “ Not over-rich before, now beggar'd quite ;
 “ More curst than at the fall ?—The sun goes out !
 “ The thorns shoot up ! What thorns in ev'ry thought !
 “ Why sense of better ? It embitters worse.
 “ Why sense ? Why life ? If but to sigh, then sink
 “ To what I was ? Twice nothing ! and much woe !
 “ Woe, from Heav'n's bounties !—Woe from what was wont
 “ To flatter most, high intellectual pow'rs !
 “ Thought, virtue, knowledge ! blessings by thy scheme,
 “ All poison'd into pains. First, knowledge, once
 “ My soul's ambition, now her greatest dread.
 “ To know myself, true wisdom ?—No, to shun
 “ That shocking science. Parent of despair !
 “ Avert thy mirror : if I see, I die.
 “ Know my Creator ? Climb his blest abode
 “ By painful speculation, pierce the veil,
 “ Dive in his nature, read his attributes,
 “ And gaze in admiration—on a foe,
 “ Obtruding life, with-holding happiness !
 “ From the full rivers that surround his throne,
 “ Not letting fall one drop of joy on man ;
 “ Man gasping for one drop, that he might cease
 “ To curse his birth, nor envy reptiles more !)

655

660

665

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675

680

685

Ye

- " Ye sable clouds ! Ye darkest shades of night !
 " Hide him, for ever hide him, from my thought, 690
 " Once all my comfort ; source, and soul of joy !
 " Now leagu'd with furies, and with * thee, against me.
 " Know his achievements ? Study his renown ?
 " Contemplate this amazing universe,
 " Dropt from his hand, with miracles replete ! 695
 " For what ? 'Mid miracles of nobler name,
 " To find one miracle of misery ?
 " To find the being, which alone can know
 " And praise his works, a blemish on his praise ?
 " Thro' nature's ample range, in thought to stroll, 700
 " And start at man, the single mourner there,
 " Breathing high hope ! chain'd down to pangs and death ?
 " Knowing is suff'ring : and shall virtue share
 " The sigh of knowledge ?—Virtue shares the sigh.
 " By straining up the steep of excellent, 705
 " By battles fought, and, from temptation, won,
 " What gains she, but the pang of seeing worth,
 " Angelic worth, soon shuff'd in the dark
 " With ev'ry vice, and swept to brutal dust ?
 " Merit is madness ; virtue is a crime ; 710
 " A crime to reason, if it costs us pain
 " Unpaid : what pain, amidst a thousand more,
 " To think the most abandon'd, after days
 " Of triumph o'er their betters, find in death
 " As soft a pillow, nor make fouler clay ! 715
 " Duty ! Religion !—These, our duty done.
 " Imp'y reward. Religion is mistake.
 " Duty !—There's none, but to repel the cheat.
 " Ye cheats, away ! ye daughters of my pride !
 " Who feign yourselves the fav'rites of the skies : 720
 " Ye tow'ring hopes ! abortive energies !
 " That toss and struggle in my lying breast,
 " To scale the skies, and build presumptions there,
 " As I were heir of an eternity ;
 " Vain, vain ambitions ! trouble me no more. 725
 " Why travel far in quest of sure defeat ?
 " As bounded as my being, be my wish.

All

* Lorenzo.

- " All is inverted, wisdom is a fool.
 " Sense ! take the rein ; blind passion ! drive us on ;
 " And ignorance ! befriend us on our way ; 739
 " Ye new, but truest patrons of our peace !
 " Yes ; give the pulse full empire ; live the brute,
 " Since as the brute, we die. The sum of man,
 " Of god-like man ! to revel, and to rot.
 " But not on equal terms with other brutes : 735
 " Their revels a more poignant relish yield,
 " And safer too ; they never poisons choose.
 " Instinct, than reason, makes more wholesome meals,
 " And sends all-marring murmur far away.
 " For sensual life they best philosophize ; 740
 " Theirs, that serene, the sages sought in vain :
 " 'Tis man alone expostulates with Heav'n ;
 " His, all the pow'r, and all the cause, to mourn.
 " Shall human eyes alone dissolve in tears ?
 " And bleed, in anguish, none but human hearts ? 745
 " The wide-stretch'd realm of intellectual woe,
 " Surpassing sensual far, is all our own.
 " In life so fatally distinguish'd, why
 " Cast in one lot, confounded, lump't, in death ?
 " Ere yet in being, was mankind in guilt ? 750
 " Why thunder'd this peculiar clause against us ?
 " All-mortal, and all-wretched !—Have the skies
 " Reasons of state their subjects may not scan,
 " Nor humbly reason when they sorely sigh ?
 " All-mortal, and all-wretched !—'Tis too much ; 755
 " Unparallel'd in nature : 'Tis too much ;
 " On being unrequested at thy hands,
 " Omnipotent ! for I see nought but pow'r.
 " And why see that ? Why thought ? To toil and eat,
 " Then make our bed in darkness, needs no thought. 760
 " What superfluities are reas'ning souls !
 " Oh ! give eternity ! or thought destroy.
 " But without thought our curse were half unfelt ;
 " Its blunted edge would spare the throbbing heart ;
 " And, therefore, 'tis bestow'd. I thank thee, Reason, 765
 " For aiding life's too small calamities,
 " And giving being to the dread of death.

" Such

- " Such are thy bounties !—Was it then too much
 " For me to trespass on the brutal rights ?
 " Too much for Heav'n to make one emmet more ? 770
 " Too much for chaos to permit my mass
 " A longer stay with essences unwrought,
 " Unfashion'd, untormented into man ?
 " Wretched preferment to this round of pains !
 " Wretched capacity of frenzy, thought ! 775
 " Wretched capacity of dying, life !
 " Life, thought, worth, wisdom, all (O foul revolt !)
 " Once friends to peace, gone over to the foe.
 " Death then, has chang'd its nature too : O death !
 " Come to my bosom, thou best gift of Heav'n ! 780
 " Best friend of man ! since man is man no more.
 " Why in this thorny wilderness so long,
 " Since there's no promis'd land's ambrosial bow'r,
 " To pay me with its honey for my stings ?
 " If needful to the selfish schemes of Heav'n 785
 " To sting us sore, why mockt our misery ?
 " Why this so sumptuous insult o'er heads ?
 " Why this illustrious canopy display'd ?
 " Why so magnificently lodg'd despair ?
 " At stated periods' sure-returning, roll 790
 " These glorious orbs, that mortals may compute
 " Their length of labours, and of pains ; nor lose
 " Their misery's full measure ?—Smiles with flow'rs,
 " And fruits, promiscuous, ever teeming earth,
 " That man may languish in luxurious scenes, 795
 " And in an Eden mourn his wither'd joys ?
 " Claim earth and skies man's admiration, due
 " For such delights ? Blest animals ! too wise
 " To wonder ; and too happy to complain !
 " Our doom decreed demands a mournful scene : 800
 " Why not a dungeon dark, for the condemn'd ?
 " Why not the dragon's subterraneous den,
 " For man to howl in ? Why not his abode
 " Of the same dismal colour with his fate ?
 " A Thebes, a Babylon, at vast expence 805
 " Of time, toil, treasure, art, for owls and adlers,
 " As congruous, as, for man, this lofty dome,
 " Which

" Which prompts proud thought, and kindles high desire ;
 " If, from her humble chamber in the dust,
 " While proud thought swells, and high desire inflames 810
 " The poor worm calls us for her inmates there ;
 " And, round us, death's inexorable hand
 " Draws the dark curtain close ; undrawn no more.
 " Undrawn no more !—Behind the cloud of death,
 " Once, I beheld a sun ; a sun which gild 815
 " That sable cloud, and turn'd it all to gold :
 " How the grave's alter'd ! Fathomless, as hell !
 " A real hell to those who dreamt of Heav'n.
 " Annihilation ! how it yawns before me !
 " Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense, 820
 " The privilege of angels, and of worms,
 " An outcast from existence ! And this spirit,
 " This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,
 " This particle of energy divine,
 " Which travels nature, flies from star to star, 825
 " And visits gods, and emulates their pow'rs,
 " For ever is extinguish'd. Horror ! Death !
 " Death of, that death I fearless once survey'd !—
 " When horror universal shall descend,
 " And Heav'n's dark concave urn all human race, 830
 " On that enormous, unrefunding tomb,
 " How just this verse ! this monumental sigh !

*Beneath the lumber of demolish'd worlds,
 Deep in the rubbish of the gen'ral wreck,
 Swept ignominious to the common mass 835
 Of matter, never dignify'd with life,
 Here lie proud rationals ; the sons of Heav'n !
 The lords of earth ! The property of worms !
 Beings of yesterday, and no to-morrow !
 Who liv'd in terror, and in pangs expir'd ! 840
 All gone to rot in chaos ; or, to make
 Their happy transit into blocks or brutes,
 Nor longer jully their CREATOR's name.*

Lorenzo, hear, pause, ponder, and pronounce.
 Just is this history ? If such is man,

845
 Mankind's

Mankind's historian, tho' divine, might weep :
 And dares Lorenzo smile ?—I know thee proud :
 For once let pride befriend thee ; pride looks pale
 At such a scene, and sighs for something more.
 Amid thy boasts, presumptuous, and displays, 850
 And art thou then a shadow ? Less than shade ?
 A nothing ? Less than nothing ? To have been,
 And not to be, is lower than unborn.
 Art thou ambitious ? Why then make the worm
 Thine equal ? Runs thy taste of pleasure high ? 855
 Why patronize sure death of ev'ry joy ?
 Charm riches ? Why choose begg'ry in the grave,
 Of ev'ry hope a bankrupt ! and for ever ?
 Ambition, pleasure, avarice, persuade thee
 To make that world of glory, rapture, wealth, 860
 They * lately prov'd thy soul's supreme desire.
 What art thou made of ? Rather how unmade !
 Great nature's master-appetite destroy'd !
 Is endless life, and happiness, despis'd ?
 Or both wish'd, here, where neither can be found ? 865
 Such man's perverse, eternal war with Heav'n !
 Dar'st thou persist ? And is there nought on earth,
 But a long train of transitory forms.
 Rising, and breaking, millions in an hour ?
 Bubbles of a fantastic deity, blown up 870
 In sport, and then in cruelty destroy'd ?
 Oh ! for what crime, unmerciful Lorenzo !
 Destroys thy scheme the whole of human race ?
 Kind is fell Lucifer, compar'd to thee :
 Oh ! spare this waste of being half-divine ; 875
 And vindicate th'œconomy of Heav'n.
 Heav'n is all love ; all joy in giving joy :
 It never had created, but to bless :
 And shall it, then, strike off the list of life,
 A being blest, or worthy so to be ? 880
 Heav'n starts at an annihilating God.
 Is that, all nature starts at, thy desire ?
 Art such a clod to wish thyself all clay ?
 What is that dreadful wish ?—The dying groan

OF

* In the Sixth Night.

Of nature, murder'd by the blackest guilt.

885

What deadly poison has thy nature drank ?

To nature undebauch'd no shock so great ;

Nature's first wish is endless happiness ;

Annihilation is an after-thought,

A monstrous wish, unborn till virtue dies.

890

And, oh ! what depth of horror lies inclos'd !

For non-existence no man ever wish'd,

But, first, he wish'd the Deity destroy'd.

If so ; what words are dark enough to draw

Thy picture true ? The darkest are too fair.

895

Beneath what baleful planet, in what hour

Of desperation, by what fury's aid,

In what infernal posture of the soul,

All hell invited, and all hell in joy

At such a birth ! a birth so near of kin :

900

Did thy soul fancy whelp so black a scheme

Of hopes abortive, faculties half-blown,

And deities begun, reduc'd to dust ?

There's nought (thou say'st) but one eternal flux

Of feeble essences, tumultuous driven

905

Thro' time's rough billows into night's abyss.

Say, in this rapid tide of human ruin,

Is there no rock, on which man's tossing thought

Can rest from terror, dare his fate survey,

And boldly think it something to be born ?

910

Amid such hourly wreck of beings fair,

Is there no central, all-sustaining base,

All-realizing, all-connecting pow'r,

Which, as it call'd forth all things, can recall,

And force destruction to refund her spoil ?

915

Command the grave restore her taken prey ?

Bid death's dark vale its human harvest yield,

And earth, and ocean, pay their debt of man,

True to the grand deposit trusted there ?

Is there no potentate, whose out-stretch'd arm,

920

When rip'ning time calls forth th'appointed hour

Pluck'd from foul devastation's famish'd maw,

Binds present, past, and future, to his throne ?

His throne, how glorious, thus divinely grac'd,

By

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

141

By germinating beings clust'ring round ! 925

A garland worthy the Divinity !

A throne, by Heav'n's omnipotence in smiles,

Built (like a Pharos tow'ring in the waves)

Amidst immense effusions of his love !

An ocean of communicated bliss ! 930

An all-prolific, all preserving God !

This were a God indeed.—And such is man,

As here presum'd : he rises from his fall.

Think'st thou Omnipotence a naked root,

Each blossom fair of Deity destroy'd ? 935

Nothing is dead ; nay, nothing sleeps ; each soul,

That ever animated human clay,

Now wakes ; is on the wing : And where, O where,

Will the swarm settle ?—When the trumpet's call,

As sounding brass, collects us, round Heav'n's throne 940

Conglob'd we bask in everlasting day

(Paternal splendor) and adhere for ever.

Had not the soul this outlet to the skies,

In this vast vessel of the universe,

How should we gasp, as in an empty void ! 945

How in the pangs of famish'd hope expire !

How bright my prospect shines ! How gloomy thine !

A trembling world ! and a devouring God !

Earth, but the shambles of Omnipotence ;

Heav'n's face all stain'd with causeless massacres 950

Of countless millions, born to feel the pang

Of being lost. Lorenzo, can it be ?

This bids us shudder at the thoughts of life.

Who would be born to such a phantom world,

Where nought substantial, but our misery ? 955

Where joy (if joy) but heightens our distress,

So soon to perish, and revive no more ?

The greater such a joy, the more it pains.

A world, so far from great (and yet how great

It shines to thee !) there's nothing real in it ; 960

Being, a shadow ! consciousness, a dream !

A dream, how dreadful ! Universal blank

Before it, and behind ! Poor man, a spark

From non-existence struck by wrath divine,

Glitt'ring

Glitt'ring a moment, nor that moment sure,
'Midst upper, nether, and surrounding night,
His, sad, sure, sudden, and eternal tomb!

Lorenzo, dost thou feel these arguments?
Or is there not but vengeance can be felt?
How hast thou dar'd the Deity dethrone?
How dar'd indict him of a world like this?
If such the world creation was a crime;
For what is crime, but cause of misery?
Retract, blasphemer! and unriddle this,
Of endless arguments above, below,
Without us, and within, the short result——

“If man's immortal, there's a God in Heav'n.”

But wherefore such redundancy? such waste
Of argument? One sets my soul at rest;
One obvious, and at hand, and, Oh!—at heart.
So just the skies, Philander's life so pain'd,
His heart so pure; that or succeeding scenes
Have palms to give, or ne'er had he been born.

“What an old tale is this!” Lorenzo cries:—
I grant this argument is old; but truth
No years impair; and had it not been true,
Thou never hadst despis'd it for its age.
Truth is immortal as thy soul; and fable
As fleeting as thy joys: Be wise, nor make
Heav'n's highest blessing, vengeance; O be wise!
Nor make a curse of immortality.

Say, know'st thou what it is? Or what thou art?
Know'st thou the importance of a soul immortal?
Behold this midnight glory: worlds on worlds!
Amazing pomp! Redouble this amaze;
Ten thousand add; add twice ten thousand more;
Then weigh the whole; one soul outweighs them all;
And calls th'astonishing magnificence
Of unintelligent creation poor.

For this, believe not me; no man believes;
Trust not in words, but deeds; and deeds no less
Than those of the Supreme; nor his, a few;
Consult them all; consulted, all proclaim
Thy soul's importance: Tremble at thyself;

For .

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

143

For whom Omnipotence has wak'd so long : 1005
Has wak'd, and work'd, for ages from the birth
Of nature to this unbelieving hour.

In this small province of his vast domain
(All nature bow, while I pronounce his name !)
What has God done, and not for this sole end, 1010
To rescue souls from death ? the soul's high price
Is writ in all the conduct of the skies.

The soul's high price is the creation's key,
Unlocks its mysteries, and naked lays
The genuine cause of ev'ry deed divine : 1015

That is the chain of ages, which maintains
Their obvious correspondence, and unites
Most distant periods in one blest design :
That, is the mighty hinge, on which have turn'd
All revolutions, whether we regard 1020

The nat'ral, civil, or religious world ;
The former two, but servants to the third :
To that their duty done, they both expire,
Their mass new-cast, forgot their deeds renown'd ;
And angels ask, " Where once they shone so fair ?" 1025

To lift us from this abject, to sublime ;
This flux, to permanent ; this dark, to day ;
This foul, to pure ; this turbid, to serene ;
This mean, to mighty !—for this glorious end
Th' Almighty, rising, his long sabbath broke ; 1030

The world was made ; was ruin'd ; was restor'd ;
Laws from the skies were publish'd ; were repeal'd ;
On earth, kings, kingdoms, rose ; kings, kingdoms, fell ;
Fam'd sages lighted up the pagan world ;
Prophets from Sion darted a keen glance 1035

Thro' distant age ; saints travell'd ; martyrs bled ;
By wonders sacred nature stood controul'd ;
The living were translated ; dead were rais'd ;
Angels, and more than angels, came from Heav'n ;
And, oh ! for this, descended lower still ; 1040

Guilt was hell's gloom ; astonish'd at his guest,
For one short moment Lucifer ador'd :
Lorenzo ! and wilt thou do less ?—For this,
That hallow'd page, fools scoff at, was inspir'd,

Of

Of all these truths thrice-venerable code !
 Deists perform your quarantine ; and then
 Fall prostrate, ere you touch it, lest you die.

1045

Nor less intensely bent infernal pow'rs
 To mar, than those of light, this end to gain.

O what a scene is here !—Lorenzo, wake,
 Rise to the thought ; exert, expand thy soul

1050

To take the vast idea : It denies

All else the name of great. Two warring worlds !

Not Europe against Afric ; warring worlds,
 Of more than mortal ! mounted on the wing !

1055

On ardent wings of energy, and zeal,

High-hov'ring o'er this little brand of strife !

This sublunary ball—But strife, for what ?

In their own cause conflicting ? No, in thine,

In man's. His single interest blows the flame ;

1060

His the sole stake ; his fate the trumpet sounds,

Which kindles war immortal. How it burns !

Tnmultuous swarms of deities in arms !

Force, force opposing, till the waves run hig'h,

And tempest nature's universal sphere.

1065

Such opposites eternal, stedfast, stern,

Such foes implacable, are good, and ill ;

Yet man, vain man, would mediate peace between them.

Think not this fiction : There was war in Heav'n."

From Heav'n's high crystal mountain, where it hung,

1070

Th'Almighty's out-stretch'd arm took down his bow,

And shot his indignation at the deep :

Re-thunder'd hell, and darted all her fires.—

And seems the stake of little moment still ?

And slumbers man, who singly caus'd the storm ?

1075

He sleeps.—And art thou shock'd at mysteries ?

The greatest, Thou. How dreadful to reflect,

What ardour, care, and counsel, mortals cause

In breasts divine ! How little in their own !

Where-e'er I turn, how new proofs pour upon me ! 1080

How happily this wond'rous view supports

My former argument ! How strongly strikes

Immortal life's full demonstration, here !

Why this exertion ? Why this strange regard

From

From Heav'n's Omnipotent indulg'd to man?— 1085

Because, in man, the glorious, dreadful pow'r,

Extremely to be pain'd, or blest, for ever.

Duration gives importance; swells the price.

An angel, if a creature of a day,

What would he be? A trifle of no weight; 1090

Or stand, or fall; no matter which; he's gone.

Because immortal, therefore is indulg'd

This strange regard of deities to dust.

Hence, Heav'n looks down on earth with all her eyes;

Hence, the soul's mighty moment in her sight; 1095

Hence, ev'ry soul has partisans above,

And ev'ry thought a critic in the skies?

Hence clay, vile clay! has angels for its guard,

And ev'ry guard a passion for his charge:

Hence from all age, the cabinet divine 1100

Has held high counsel o'er the fate of man.

Nor have the clouds those gracious counsels hid.

Angels undrew the curtain of the throne,

And Providence came forth to meet mankind;

In various modes of emphasis and awe, 1105

He spoke his will, and trembling nature heard;

He spoke it loud, in thunder, and in storm.

Witness, thou Sinai! * whose cloud-cover'd height,

And shaken basis, own'd the present GOD:

Witness, ye billows! † whose returning tide, 1110

Breaking the chain that fasten'd it in air,

Swept Egypt, and her menaces, to hell;

Witness, ye flames th' Assyrian tyrant blew ‡

To sev'nfold rage, as impotent, as strong:

And thou, earth, witness, whose expanding jaws 1115

Clos'd o'er presumption's sacrilegious sons: ||

Has not each element, in turn, subscrib'd

The soul's high price, and sworn it to the wise?

Has not flame, ocean, æther, earthquake, strove

To strike this truth through adamantin man? 1120

If not all adamant, Lorenzo, hear;

All is delusion, nature is wrapt up,

* Exod. xix. 16, 18. † Exod. xiv. 27. ‡ Dan. iii. 19.

|| Numb. xvi. 32.

In tenfold night, from reason's keenest eye ;
 There's no consistence, meaning, plan, or end,
 In all beneath the sun, in all above,
 (As far as man can penetrate) or Heav'n
 Is an immense, inestimable prize ;
 Or all is nothing, or that prize is all.—
 And shall each toy be still a match for Heav'n ?
 And full equivalent for groans below ?
 Who would not give a trifle to prevent
 What he would give a thousand worlds to cure ?

1125

Lorenzo, thou hast seen (if thine, to see)
 All nature, and her GOD (by nature's course,
 And nature's course controul'd) declare for me :
 The skies above proclaim "Immortal man !"
 And "Man immortal !" all below resounds.

1130

The world's a system of theology,
 Read by the greatest strangers to the schools ;
 If honest, learn'd ; and sages o'er a plough.
 Is not, Lorenzo, then, impos'd on thee

1135

This hard alternative ; or, to renounce
 Thy reason, and thy sense ; or, to believe ?

1140

What then is unbelief ? 'Tis an exploit ;

A strenuous enterprize : to gain it, man
 Must burst thro' ev'ry bar of common sense,
 Of common shame, magnanimously wrong.

1145

And what rewards the sturdy combatant ?

His prize, repentance ; infamy his crown.

But wherefore, infamy ?—For want of faith,

1150

Down the steep precipice of wrong he slides ;

There's nothing to support him in the right.

Faith in the future wanting, is, at least

In embryo, ev'ry weakness, ev'ry guilt ;

And strong temptation ripens it to birth.

1155

If this life's gain invites him to the deed,

Why not his country sold, his father slain ?

'Tis virtue to pursue our good supreme ;

And his supreme, his only good is here.

Ambition, avarice, by the wise disdain'd,

1160

Is perfect wisdom, while mankind are fools,

And think a turf, or tomb-stone, covers all :

These

These find employment, and provide for sense
 A richer pasture, and a larger range ;
 And sense by right divine ascends the throne, 1165
 When virtue's prize and prospect are no more ;
 Virtue no more we think the will of Heav'n.
 Would Heav'n quite beggar virtue, if belov'd ?
 "Has virtue charms ?"—I grant her heav'nly fair ;
 But if unportion'd, all will int'rest wed ; 1170
 Tho' that our admiration, this our choice.
 The virtues grow on immortality ;
 That root destroy'd, they wither and expire.
 A DEITY believ'd, will nought avail ;
 Rewards and punishments make GOD ador'd ; 1175
 And hopes and fears give conscience all her pow'r.
 As in the dying parent dies the child,
 Virtue, with immortality, expires.
 Who tells me he denies his soul immortal,
 Whate'er his boast, has told me, he's a knave. 1180
 His duty 'tis, to love himself alone ;
 Nor care tho' mankind perish, if he smiles.
 Who thinks ere long the man shall wholly die,
 Is dead already, nought but brute survives.
 And are there such ?—Such candidates there are 1185
 For more than death ; for utter loss of being,
 Being, the basis of the DEITY !
 Ask you the cause ?—The cause they will not tell ;
 Nor need they : Oh ! the forceries of sense !
 They work this transformation on the soul, 1190
 Dismount her like the serpent at the fall,
 Dismount her from her native wing (which soar'd
 Ere-while ethereal heights) and throw her down,
 To lick the dust, and crawl, in such a thought.
 Is it in words to paint you ? O ye fall'n ! 1195
 Fall'n from the wings of reason, and of hope !
 Erect in stature, prone in appetite !
 Patrons of pleasure, posting into pain !
 Lovers of argument, averse to sense !
 Boasters of liberty, fast bound in chains ! 1200
 Lords of the wide creation, and the shame !
 More senseless than th'irrationals you scorn !

H.

More

More base than those you rule ! Than those you pity,
 Far more undone ! O ye most infamous
 Of beings, from superior dignity ! 1205
 Deepest in woe from means of boundless bliss !
 Ye curst by blessings infinite ! Because
 Most highly favour'd, most profoundly lost !
 Ye motley mass of contradiction strong !
 And are you, too, convinc'd, your souls fly off 1210
 In exhalation soft, and die in air,
 From the full flood of evidence against you ?
 In the coarse drudgeries and sinks of sense,
 Your souls have quite worn out the make of Heav'n,
 By vice new-cast, and creatures of your own : 1215
 But tho' you can deform, you can't destroy ;
 To curse, not uncreate, is all your pow'r.
 Lorenzo, this black brotherhood renounce ;
 Renounce St. Evremont * and read St. Paul.
 Ere wrapt by miracle, by reason wing'd, 1220
 His mounting mind made long abode in Heav'n.
 This is free thinking, unconfin'd to parts,
 To send the soul on curious travel bent,
 Thro' all the provinces of human thought ;
 To dart her flight, thro' the whole sphere of man ; 1225
 Of this vast universe to make the tour ;
 In each recess of space, and time, at home ;
 Familiar with their wonders ; diving deep !
 And, like a prince of boundless int'rests there,
 Still most ambitious of the most remote ; 1230
 To look on truth unbroken, and entire :
 Truth in the system, the full orb ; where truths
 By truths enlighten'd, and sustain'd, afford
 An arch-like, strong foundation, to support
 Th'incumbent weight of absolute, complete 1235
 Conviction ; here, the more we press, we stand
 More firm : who most examine most believe.
 Parts, like half-sentences, confound ! The whole
 Conveys the sense, and GOD is understood ;
 Who not in fragments writes to human race : 1240
 Read his whole volume, Sceptic ; then reply.

This

* An infidel writer.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH.

149

This, this, is thinking free, a thought that grasps
 Beyond a grain, and looks beyond an hour.
 Turn up thine eye, survey this midnight scene ;
 What are earth's kingdoms, to yon boundless orbs 1245
 Of human souls, one day, the destin'd range ?
 And what yon boundless orbs, to godlike man ?
 Those num'rous worlds that throng the firmament,
 And ask more space in Heav'n, can roll at large
 In man's capacious thought, and still leave room 1250
 For ampler orbs ; for new creations, there.
 Can such a soul contract itself, to gripe
 A point of no dimension, of no weight ?
 It can ; it does : the world is such a point :
 And, of that point, how small a part enslaves ! 1255
 How small a part !—of nothing, shall I say ?
 Why not ?—Friends, our chief treasure ! how they drop !
 Lucia, Narcissa fair, Philander, gone !
 The grave, like fabled Cerberus, has op'd
 A triple mouth ; and in an awful voice, 1260
 Loud calls my soul, and utters all I sing.
 How the world falls to pieces round about us !
 And leaves us in a ruin of our joy !
 What says this transportation of my friends ?
 It bids me love the place where now they dwell, 1265
 And scorn this wretched spot, they leave so poor.
 Eternity's vast ocean lies before thee ;
 There, there, Lorenzo ! thy Clarissa sails.
 Give thy mind sea-room ; keep it wide of earth,
 That rock of souls immortal ; cut thy chord ; 1270
 Weigh anchor : spread thy sails ; call ev'ry wind ;
 Eye thy great pole-star ; make the land of life.
 Two kinds of life has double-natur'd man,
 And two of death ; the last far more severe.
 Life animal is nurtur'd by the sun ; 1275
 Thrives on his bounties, triumphs in his beams.
 Life rational subsists on higher food,
 Triumphant in his beams, who made the day.
 When we leave that sun, and are left by this,
 (The fate of all who die in stubborn guilt) 1280
 'Tis utter darkness ; strictly doubled death.

We sink by no judicial stroke of Heav'n,
 But nature's course; as sure as plummet fall.
 Since God, or man, must alter, ere they meet,
 (Since light and darkness blend not in one sphere)
 'Tis manifest, Lorenzo! who must change.

1285

If, then, that double death should prove thy lot,
 Blame not the bowels of the Deity;
 Man shall be blest, as far as man permits.
 Not man alone, all rationals, Heav'n arms
 With an illustrious, but tremendous pow'r
 To counteract its own most gracious ends;
 And this, of strict necessity, not choice:
 That pow'r deny'd, men, angels, were no more,
 But passive engines, void of praise, or blame.
 A nature rational implies the pow'r
 Of being blest, or wretched, as we please;
 Else idle reason would have nought to do;
 And he that would be barr'd capacity
 Of pain, courts incapacity of bliss.
 Heav'n wills our happiness, allows our doom;
 Invites us ardently, but not compels;
 Heav'n but persuades, almighty man decrees;
 Man is the maker of immortal fates,
 Man falls by man, if finally he falls;
 And fall he must, who learns from death alone
 The dreadful secret—That he lives for ever.

1290

1295

1300

1305

Why this to thee?—Thee yet, perhaps, in doubt
 Of second life? But wherefore doubtful still?
 Eternal life is nature's ardent wish:
 What ardently we wish, we soon believe;
 Thy tardy faith declares that wish destroy'd:
 What has destroy'd?—Shall I tell thee, What?
 When fear'd the future, 'tis no longer wish'd;
 And when unwish'd, we strive to disbelieve.
 "Thus infidelity our guilt betrays."

1310

1315

Nor that the sole detection! blush, Lorenzo,
 Blush for hypocrisy, if not for guilt.
 The future fear'd?—An infidel!—and fear!
 Fear what? a dream? a fable? How thy dread
 Unwilling evidence, and therefore strong,

1320

Affords

Affords my cause an undesign'd support !

How disbelief affirms, what it denies !

" It, unawares, asserts immortal life."—

Surprising ! Infidelity turns out

1325

A creed, and a confession of our sins :

Apostates, thus, are orthodox divines.

Lorenzo, with Lorenzo clash no more :

Nor longer a transparent vizard wear.

Think'st thou, religion only has the mask ?

1330

Our infidels are Satan's hypocrites,

Pretend the worst, and, at the bottom, fail.

When visited by thought (thought will intrude)

Like him they serve, they tremble, and believe.

Is there hypocrisy so foul as this ?

1335

So fatal to the welfare of the world ?

What detestation, what contempt, their due !

And if unpaid, be thank'd for their escape

That Christian candor they strive hard to scorn,

If not for that asylum, they might find

1340

A hell on earth ; nor 'scape a worse below.

With insolence, and impotence of thought,

Instead of racking fancy, to refute,

Reform thy manners, and the truth enjoy.—

But shall I dare confess the dire result ?

1345

Can thy proud reason brook so black a brand ?

From purer manners, to sublimer faith,

Is nature's unavoidable ascent ;

An honest Deist, where the Gospel shines,

Matur'd to nobler, in the Christian ends.

1350

When that blest change arrives, e'en cast aside

This song superfluous : life immortal strikes

Conviction, in a flood of light divine.

A Christian dwells, like * Uriel, in the sun.

Meridian evidence puts doubt to flight ;

1355

And ardent hope anticipates the skies.

Of that bright sun, Lorenzo ! scale the sphere ;

'Tis easy ; it invites thee ; it descends

H 4

From

* See Milton's Paradise Lost.

From Heav'n to woo, and waft thee whence it came :
 Read and revere the sacred page ; a page 1360
 Where triumphs immortality ; a page
 Which not the whole creation could produce ;
 Which not the conflagration shall destroy ;
 In nature's ruins not one letter lost :
 'Tis printed in the mind of gods for ever. 1365

In proud disdain of what e'en gods adore,
 Dost smile ?—Poor wretch ; thy guardian angel weeps.
 Angels, and men, assent to what I sing ;
 Wits smile, and thank me for my midnight dream.
 How vicious hearts fume frenzy to the brain ! 1370
 Parts push us on to pride, and pride to shame ;
 Pert infidelity is wit's cockade,
 To grace the brazen brow that braves the skies,
 By loss of being, dreadfully secure.
 Lorenzo ! if thy doctrine wins the day, 1375
 And drives my dreams, defeated, from the field ;
 If this is all, if earth's the final scene,
 Take heed ; stand fast ; be sure to be a knave ;
 A knave in grain ; ne'er deviate to the right :
 Shouldst thou be good—How infinite thy loss ! 1380
 Guilt only makes Annihilation gain !
 Blest scheme ! which life deprives of comfort, death
 Of hope ; and which vice only recommends.
 If so ; where, infidels, your bait thrown out
 To catch weak converts ? Where your lofty boast 1385
 Of zeal for virtue, and of love to man ?
 Annihilation ! I confess, in these.

What can reclaim you ? Dare I hope profound
 Philosophers the converts of a song ?
 Yet know, its * title flatters you, not me ; 1390
 Yours be the praise to make my title good ;
 Mine, to bless Heav'n, and triumph in your praise.
 But since so pestilential your disease,
 Tho' sov'reign is the med'cine I prescribe,
 As yet, I'll neither triumph, nor despair ; 1395
 But hope, ere long, my midnight dream will wake

Your

* The infidel reclaimed.

Your hearts, and teach your wisdom—to be wise:
 For why should souls immortal, made for bliss,
 E'er wish (and wish in vain!) that souls could die?
 What ne'er can die, Oh! grant to live; and crown 1400
 The wish, and aim, and labour of the skies;
 Increase, and enter on the joys of Heav'n:
 Thus shall my title pass a sacred seal,
 Receive an imprimatur from above,
 While angels shout—an infidel reclaim'd! 1405
 To close, Lorenzo! spite of all my pains,
 Still seems it strange, that thou shouldst live for ever?
 Is it less strange, that thou shouldst live at all?
 This is a miracle; and that no more.
 Who gave beginning, can exclude an end. 1410
 Deny thou art: then, doubt if thou shalt be.
 A miracle with miracles inclos'd,
 Is man: and starts his faith at what is strange?
 What less than wonders, from the wonderful?
 What less than miracles from God, can flow? 1415
 Admit a God—that mystery supreme!
 That cause uncaus'd! All other wonders cease;
 Nothing marvellous for him to do:
 Deny him—All is mystery besides;
 Millions of Mysteries! Each darker far, 1420
 Than that thy wisdom would, unwisely, shun.
 If weak thy faith, why choose the harder side?
 We nothing know, but what is marvellous;
 Yet what is marvellous, we can't believe.
 So weak our reason, and so great our God, 1425
 What most surprises in the sacred page,
 Or full as strange, or stranger, must be true.
 Faith is not reason's labour, but repose.
 To faith, and virtue, why so backward man?
 From hence:—The present strongly strikes us all; 1430
 The future, faintly: can we, then, be men?
 If men, Lorenzo! the reverse is right.
 Reason is man's peculiar: sense the brute's.
 The present is the scanty realm of sense;
 The future, reason's empire unconfin'd: 1435

On that expanding all her godlike pow'r,
 She plans, provides, expatiates, triumphs, there ;
 There builds her blessings ; there expects her praise,
 And nothing asks of fortune, or of men.
 And what is reason ? Be she thus, defin'd ;
 Reason is upright stature in the soul.
 Oh ! be a man ; and strive to be a god.

1440

“ For what ? (thou sayst)—to damp the joys of life ?”
 No ; to give heart and substance to thy joys.

That tyrant, hope, mark how she domineers ;

1445

She bids us quit realities for dreams ;

Safety, and peace, for hazard, and alarm ;

That tyrant o'er the tyrants of the soul,

She bids ambition quit its taken prize,

Spurn the luxuriant branch on which it fits,

1450

Tho' bearing crowns, to spring at distant game,

And plunge in toils and dangers—for repose.

If hope precarious, and if things, when gain'd,

Of little moment, and as little stay,

Can sweeten toils and dangers into joys ;

1455

What then, that hope, which nothing can defeat,

Our leave unask'd ? Rich hope of boundless bliss !

Bliss, past man's pow'r to paint it ; time's, to close !

This hope is earth's most estimable price :

This is man's portion, while no more than man

1460

Hope, of all passions, most befriends us here ;

Passions of prouder name befriend us less.

Joy has her tears, and transport has her death ;

Hope, like a cordial, innocent tho' strong,

Man's heart, at once, inspires and serenes ;

1465

Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys :

'Tis all, our present state can safely bear,

Health to the frame ! and vigour to the mind !

A joy temper'd ! a chastis'd delight !

Like the fair summer-evening, mild, and sweet !

1470

'Tis man's full cup ; his paradise below !

A blest hereafter, then, or hop'd, or gain'd,

Is all ;—our whole of happiness : full proof,

I chote no trivial or inglorious theme.

NIGHT THE SEVENTH. 155

And know, ye foes to song ! (well-meaning men, 1475
Tho' quite forgotten * half your Bible's praise !)
Important truths, in spite of verse, may please :
Grave minds you praise ; nor can you praise too much :
If there is weight in an eternity,
Let the grave listen ;—and be graver still. 1480

* The poetical parts of it.

End of Night the Seventh.

H 6

THE

THE
COMPLAINT.

VIRTUE'S APOLOGY;

O. R.,

The Man of the World Answered.

In which are considered,

*The Love of this Life; the Ambition and Pleasure,
with the Wit and Wisdom of the World.*

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

AND has all nature, then, espous'd my part?
Have I brib'd Heav'n, and earth, to plead against thee?
And is thy soul immortal?—What remains?
All, all, Lorenzo; make immortal, blest.
Unblest immortals! What can shock us more?
And yet Lorenzo still affects the world;
There, stows his treasure; thence, his title draws.
Man of the world! (for such wouldst thou be call'd)
And art thou proud of that inglorious style?
Proud of reproach? For a reproach it was,

5

10
In

In ancient days ; and Christian,—in an age,
 When men were men, and not asham'd of Heav'n,
 Fir'd their ambition, as it crown'd their joy.
 Sprinkled with dew's from the Castalian font,
 Fain would I re-baptize thee, and confer
 A purer spirit, and a nobler name.

15

Thy fond attachments fatal, and inflam'd,
 Point out my path, and dictate to my song :
 To thee, the world how fair ! how strongly strikes
 Ambition ! and gay pleasure stronger still !
 Thy triple bane ! the triple bolt, that lays
 Thy virtue dead ! be these my triple theme ;
 Nor shall thy wit, or wisdom, be forgot.

20

Common the theme ; not so the song ; if she
 My song invokes, Urania, deigns to smile.
 The charm that chains us to the world, her foe,
 If she dissolves, the man of earth, at once,
 Starts from his trance, and sighs for other scenes ;
 Scenes, where these sparks of night, these stars shall shine
 Unnumber'd suns (for all things, as they are,
 The blest behold ;) and, in one glory, pour
 Their blended blaze on man's astonish'd sight ;
 A blaze,—the least illustrious object there.

25

30

Lorenzo ! since eternal is at hand,
 To swallow time's ambitions ; as the vast
 Leviathan, the bubbles vain, that ride
 High on the foaming billow ; what avail
 High titles, high descent, attainments high,
 If unattain'd our highest ? O Lorenzo !
 What lofty thoughts, these elements above,
 What tow'ring hopes, what fallies from the sun,
 What grand surveys of destiny divine,
 And pompous presage of unfathom'd fate,
 Should roll in bosoms, where a spirit burns,
 Bound for eternity ! In bosoms read
 By Him, who foibles in archangels sees !
 On human hearts he bends a jealous eye,
 And marks, and in Heav'n's register inrolls
 The rise and progress of each option there ;
 Sacred to doomsday ! that the page unfolds,

35

40

45

50
And

And spreads us to the gaze of gods and men.

And what an option, O Lorenzo ! thine !

This world ! and this, unrivall'd by the skies !

A world, where lust of pleasure, grandeur, gold,

Three dæmons that divide its realms between them,

With strokes alternate buffet to and fro

Man's restless heart, their sport, their flying ball ;

Till, with the giddy circle, sick and tir'd,

It pants for peace, and drops into despair.

Such is the world Lorenzo sets above

That glorious promise, angels were esteem'd

Too mean to bring ; a promise, their ador'd

Descended to communicate, and press,

By counsel, miracle, life, death, on man.

Such is the world Lorenzo's wisdom woes,

And on its thorny pillow seeks repose ;

A pillow, which, like opiates ill prepar'd,

Intoxicates, but not composes ; fills

The visionary mind with gay chimeras,

All the wild trash of sleep, without the rest ;

What unfeign'd travel, and what dreams of joy !

How frail, men, things ! how momentary both !

Fantastic chace, of shadows hunting shades !

The gay, the busy, equal, tho' unlike ;

Equal in wisdom, differently wise !

Thro' flow'ry meadows, and thro' dreary wastes,

One bustling, and one dancing, into death.

There's not a day, but, to the man of thought

Betrays some secret, that throws new reproach

On life, and makes him sick of seeing more.

The scenes of bus'ness tell us—"What are men ;"

The scenes of pleasure—"What is all beside :"

There others we despise ; and here, ourselves.

Amid disgust eternal, dwells delight ?

'Tis approbation strikes the strings of joy.

What wond'rous prize has kindled this career,

Stuns with the din, and choaks us with the dust,

On life's gay stage, one inch above the grave ?

The proud run up and down in quest of eyes ;

The sensual in pursuit of something worse ;

55

60

65

70

75

80

85

90
The

The grave, of gold ; the politic, of pow'r ;
 And all, of other butterflies, as vain !
 As eddies draw things frivolous, and light,
 How is man's heart by vanity drawn in !
 On the swift circle of returning toys,
 Whirl'd, straw-like, round and round, and then ingulph'd,
 Where gay delusion darkens to despair !

" This is a beaten track."—Is this a track
 Should not be beaten ? Never beat enough,
 Till enough learnt the truths it would inspire.
 Shall truth be silent, because folly frowns ?
 Turn the world's history ; what find we there,
 But fortune's sports, or nature's cruel claims,
 Or woman's artifice, or man's revenge,
 And endless inhumanities on man !
 Fame's trumpet seldom sounds, but, like the knell,
 It brings bad tidings ! How it hourly blows
 Man's misadventures round the list'ning world !
 Man is the tale of narrative old time ;
 Sad tale ! which high as paradise begins ;
 As if, the toil of travel to delude,
 From stage to stage, in his eternal round,
 The days, his daughters, as they spin our hours
 On fortune's wheel, where accident unthought
 Oft, in a moment, snaps life's strongest thread,
 Each, in her turn, some tragic story tells,
 With, now-and-then, a wretched farce between ;
 And fills his chronicle with human woes.

Time's daughters, true as those of men, deceive us :
 Not one, but puts some cheat on all mankind :
 While in their father's bosom, not yet ours,
 They flatter our fond hopes ; and promise much
 Of amiable ; but hold him not o'er-wise,
 Who dares to trust them ; and laugh round the year,
 At still-confiding, still-confounded man ;
 Confiding, tho' confounded ; hoping on,
 Untaught by trial, unconvinc'd by proof,
 And ever looking for the never-seen :
 Life to the last, like harden'd felons, lies ;
 Nor owns itself a cheat, till it expires.

Its little joys go out by one and one;
 And leave poor man, at length, in perfect night :
 Night darker than what, now, involves the pole.

O Thou, who dost permit these ills to fall,
 For gracious ends, and wouldst that man should mourn ! 135

O Thou, whose hand this goodly fabric fram'd,
 Who know'st it best, and wouldst that man should know :
 What is this sublunary world ? A vapour !

A vapour all it holds ; itself, a vapour,
 From the damp bed of chaos, by thy beam 140
 Exhal'd, ordain'd to swim its destin'd hour
 In ambient air, then melt, and disappear.

Earth's days are number'd, nor remote her doom ;
 As mortal, tho' less transient, than her sons ;
 Yet they doat on her, as the world and they 145
 Were both eternal, solid ; Thou ! a dream.

They doat, on what ? Immortal views apart,
 A region of outsidings ; a land of shadows !

A fruitful field of flow'ry promises !

A wilderness of joys ! perplex'd with doubts, 150
 And sharp with thorns ! A troubled ocean, spread
 With bold adventurers, their all on board ;

No second hope, if here their fortune frowns ;
 Frown soor' must. Of various rates they sail,
 Of ensigns various ? all alike in this, 155

All restless, anxious ; tofs'd with hopes and fears,
 In calmest skies ; obnoxious all to storm !

And stormy the most gen'ral blast of life :

All bound for happiness ; yet few provide
 The chart of knowledge, pointing where it lies ; 160

Or virtue's helm, to shape the course design'd :

All, more or less, capricious fate lament,

Now lifted by the tide, and now resorb'd,

And farther from their wishes, than before :

All, more or less, against each other dash, 165

To mutual hurt, by gusts of passion driv'n,
 And suff'ring more from folly than from fate.

Ocean ! thou dreadful and tumultuous home
 Of dangers, at eternal war with man !

Death's capital, where most he domineers,

170
 With

With all his chosen terrors frowning round
 (Tho' lately feasted high at * Albion's cost)
 Wide-op'ning, and loud-roaring still for more !
 Too faithful mirror ; how dost thou reflect
 The melancholy face of human life ! 175
 The strong resemblance tempts me farther still :
 And, haply, Britain may be deeper struck
 By moral truth, in such a mirror seen,
 Which nature holds for ever at her eye.
 Self-flatter'd, unexperienc'd, high in hope, 180
 When young, with sanguine cheer, and streamers gay,
 We cut our cable, launch into the world,
 And fondly dream each wind and star our friend ;
 All, in some darling enterprize embark'd ;
 But where is he can fathom its event ? 185
 Amid a multitude of artless hands,
 Ruin's sure perquisite ! her lawful prize !
 Some steer aright ; but the black blast blows hard,
 And puffs them wide of hope ; with hearts of proof,
 Full against wind and tide, some win their way ; 190
 And when strong effort has deserv'd the port,
 And tugg'd it into view, 'tis won ! 'tis lost !
 Tho' strong their oar, still stronger is their fate :
 They strike ; and while they triumph, they expire.
 In stress of weather, most ; some sink outright ; 195
 O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close ;
 To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
 Others a short memorial leave behind,
 Like a flag floating, when the bark's ingulph'd ;
 It floats a moment, and is seen no more. 200
 One Cæsar lives : a thousand are forgot.
 How few, beneath auspicious planets born,
 (Darlings of Providence ! fond fate's elect !)
 With swelling sails make good the promis'd port,
 With all their wishes freighted ! Yet ev'n these, 205
 Freight with all their wishes, soon complain :
 Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
 They still are men : and when is man secure ?
 As

As fatal time as storm ! the rush of years.
 Beats down their strength : their numberless escapes 210
 In ruin end : And, now, their proud success
 But plants new terrors on the victor's brow :
 What pain to quit the world, just made their own,
 Their nest so deeply down'd, and built so high !
 Too low they build, who build beneath the stars. 215

Woe then apart (if woe apart can be
 From mortal man) and fortune at our nod,
 The gay ! rich ! great ! triumphant ! and august !
 What are they ?—The most happy (strange to say !)
 Convince me most of human misery : 220
 What are they ? Smiling wretches of to-morrow !
 More wretched, then, than e'er their slave can be :
 Their treach'rous blessings, at the day of need,
 Like other faithless friends, unmask, and sting :
 Then, what provoking indigence in wealth ! 225
 What aggravated impotence in power !
 High titles, then, what insult of their pain !
 If that sole anchor, equal to the waves,
 Immortal hope ! defies not the rude storm,
 Takes comfort from the foaming billow's rage, 230
 And makes a welcome harbour of the tomb.

Is this a sketch of what thy soul admires ?
 " But here (thou say'st) the miseries of life
 " Are huddled in a group. A more distinct
 " Survey, perhaps, might bring thee better news." 235
 Look on life's stages : They speak plainer still :
 The plainer they, the deeper wilt thou sigh.
 Look on thy lovely boy : in him behold
 The best that can befall the best on earth :
 The boy has virtue by his mother's side : 240
 Yes, on Florello look : a father's heart
 Is tender, tho' the man's is made of stone :
 The truth, thro' such a medium seen, may make
 Impression deep, and fondness prove thy friend.

Florello, lately cast on this rude coast 245
 A helpless infant : now a heedless child :
 To poor Clarissa's throes, thy care succeeds :
 Care full of love, and yet severe as hate !

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

163

O'er thy soul's joy how oft thy fondness frowns !
Needful austerities his will restrain :

250

As thorns fence in the tender plant from harm.

As yet, his reason cannot go alone :

But asks a sterner nurse to lead it on.

His little heart is often terrify'd ;

The blush of morning, in his cheek, turns pale ;

255

Its pearly dew-drop trembles in his eye ;

His harmless eye ! and drowns an angel there.

Ah ! what avails his innocence ? The task

Injoin'd must discipline his early pow'rs ;

He learns to sigh, ere he is known to sin ;

260

Guiltless, and sad ! A wretch before the fall !

How cruel this ! more cruel to forbear.

Our nature such, with necessary pains

We purchase prospects, of precarious peace :

Tho' not a father, this might steal a sigh.

265

Suppose him disciplin'd aright (if not

'Twill sink our poor account to poorer still ;)

Ripe from the tutor, proud of liberty,

He leaps inclosure, bounds into the world ;

The world is taken, after ten years toil,

270

Like ancient Troy, and all its joys his own.

Alas ! the world's a tutor more severe ;

Its lesson's hard, and ill deserves his pains :

Unteaching all his virtuous nature taught,

Or books (fair virtue's advocates !) inspir'd.

275

For who receives him into public life ?

Men of the world, the terræ-filial breed,

Welcome the modest stranger to the sphere,

(Which glitter'd long, at distance, in his sight)

And, in their hospitable arms, inclose :

280

Men, who think nought so strong of the romance,

So rank knight-errant, as a real friend :

Men, that act up to reason's golden rule,

All weakness of affection quite subdu'd :

Men, that would blush at being thought sincere,

285

And feign, for glory, the few faults they want :

That love a lie, where truth would pay as well :

As if, to them, vice shone her own reward.

Lorenzo 1

Lorenzo! canst thou bear a shocking sight?
 Such, for Florello's sake, 'twill now appear: 290
 See, the steel'd files of season'd veterans,
 Train'd to the world, in burnish'd falsehood bright;
 Deep in the fatal stratagems of peace:
 All soft sensation, in the throng, rubb'd off:
 All their keen purpose, in politeness sheath'd: 295
 His friends eternal—during interest:
 His foes implacable—when worth their while:
 At war with ev'ry welfare, but their own:
 As wise as Lucifer: and half as good:
 And by whom none, but Lucifer, can gain— 300
 Naked, thro' these (so common fate ordains)
 Naked of heart, his cruel course he runs,
 Stung out of all, most amiable in life,
 Prompt truth, and open thought, and smiles unfeign'd:
 Affection, as his species, wide diffus'd: 305
 Noble presumptions to mankind's renown:
 Ingenuous trust, and confidence of love.
 These claims to joy (if mortals joy might claim)
 Will cost him many a sigh; till time and pains,
 From the slow mistress of this school, experience, 310
 And her assistant, pausing, pale, distrust,
 Purchase a dear-bought clue, to lead his youth
 Thro' serpentine obliquities of life,
 And the dark labyrinth of human hearts.
 And happy! if the clue shall come so cheap; 315
 For, while we learn to fence with public guilt,
 Full oft we feel its foul contagion too,
 If less than heav'nly virtue is our guard.
 Thus, a strange kind of curst necessity
 Brings down the sterling temper of his soul, 320
 By base alloy, to bear the current stamp
 Below call'd wisdom; sinks him into safety;
 And brands him into credit with the world!
 Where specious titles dignify disgrace;
 And nature's injuries are arts of life; 325
 Where brighter reason prompts to bolder crimes;
 And heav'nly talents make infernal hearts!
 That unsurmountable extreme of guilt!

Poor

Poor Machiavel ! who labour'd hard his plan,
 Forgot, that genius need not go to school ! 330
 Forgot, that man, without a tutor wife,
 His plan had practis'd, long before 'twas writ.
 The world's all title-page, there's no contents ;
 The world's all face ; the man who shews his heart,
 Is hooted for his nudities, and scorn'd. 335
 A man I knew, who liv'd upon a smile ;
 And well it fed him ; he look'd plump and fair ;
 While rankest venom foam'd thro' ev'ry vein.
 Lorenzo, what I tell thee, take not ill !
 Living, he fawn'd on ev'ry soul alive ; 340
 And, dying, curs'd the friend on whom he liv'd.
 To such proficients thou art half a saint.
 In foreign realms (for thou hast travell'd far)
 How curious to contemplate two state-rooks,
 Studious their nests to feather in a trice, 345
 With all the necromantics of their art,
 Playing the game of faces on each other,
 Making court sweet-meats of their latent-gall,
 In foolish hope, to steal each other's trust ;
 Both cheating, both exulting, both deceiv'd ; 350
 And, sometimes, both (let earth rejoice) undone !
 Their parts we doubt not ; but be that their shame ;
 Shall men of talents, fit to rule mankind,
 Stoop to mean wiles, that would disgrace a fool,
 And lose the thanks of those few friends they serve ? 355
 For who can thank the man he cannot see ?

Why so much cover ? It defeats itself.
 Ye that know all things ! know ye not, mens hearts
 Are therefore known, because they are conceal'd ?
 For why conceal'd ?—The cause they need not tell. 360
 I give him joy that's awkward at a lie ;
 Whose feeble nature truth keeps still in awe ;
 His incapacity is his renown.

'Tis great, 'tis manly, to disdain disguise ;
 It shews our spirit, or it proves our strength. 365
 Thou say'st, 'tis needful : Is it therefore right ?
 Howe'er, I grant it some small sign of grace,
 To strain at an excuse : And wouldst thou then

Escape

Escape that cruel need ? Thou may'st, with ease ;
 Think no post needful that demands a knave.
 When late our civil helm was shifting hands,
 So P—— thought : Think better if you can.

370

But this, how rare ! the public path of life
 Is dirty :—Yet, allow that dirt its due,
 It makes the noble mind more noble still :
 The world's not neuter ! it will wound, or save :
 Our virtue quench, or indignation fire.
 You say, the world, well known, will make a man :
 The world, well known, will give our hearts to heav'n,
 Or make us dæmons, long before we die.

375

To shew how fair the world (thy mistress) shines,
 Take either part, sure ills attend the choice :
 Sure, tho' not equal, detriment ensues.
 Not virtue's self is deify'd on earth :
 Virtue has her relapses, conflicts, foes :
 Foes, that ne'er fail to make her feel their hate.
 Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.

380

True : friends to virtue, last, and least, complain :
 But if they sigh, can others hope to smile ?

If wisdom has her miseries to mourn,
 How can poor folly lead a happy life ?

390

And if both suffer, what has earth to boast,
 Where he's most happy, who the least laments ?
 Where much, much patience, the most envy'd state,
 And some forgiveness, needs, the best of friends ?
 For friend, or happy life, who looks not higher,
 Of neither shall he find the shadow here.

395

The world's sworn advocate, without a fee,
 Lorenzo smartly, with a smile, replies :
 " Thus far my song is right : and all must own,
 " Virtue has her peculiar set of pains.—
 " And joys peculiar who to vice denies ?
 " If vice it is, with nature to comply :
 " If pride and sense, are so predominant,
 " To check, not overcome them, makes a faint :
 " Can nature in a plainer voice proclaim
 " Pleasure, and glory, the chief good of man ?"

400

405

Can

Can pride, and sensuality, rejoice?
 From purity of thought, all pleasure springs:
 And, from an humble spirit all our peace. 410
 Ambition, pleasure! let us talk of these:
 Of these, the porch, and academy talk'd:
 Of these, each following age had much to say:
 Yet unexhausted, still, the needful theme.
 Who talks of these, to mankind all at once 415
 He talks: for where's the saint from either free?
 Are these thy refuge?—No: these rush upon thee:
 Thy vitals seize, and, vulture-like, devour:
 I'll try, if I can pluck thee from thy rock,
 Prometheus, from this barren ball of earth: 420
 If reason can unchain thee, thou art free.
 And, first, thy Caucasus, ambition calls:
 Mountain of torments! eminence of woes!
 Of courted woes! and courted thro' mistake!
 'Tis not ambition charms thee: 'tis a cheat 425
 Will make thee start, as H—— at his moor.
 Dost grasp at greatness? First, know what it is:
 Think'st thou thy greatness in distinction lies?
 Not in the feather, wave it e'er so high,
 By fortune stuck to mark us from the throng, 430
 Is glory lodg'd: 'Tis lodg'd in the reverse:
 In that which joins, in that which equals all,
 The monarch and his slave:—"A deathless soul,
 "Unbounded prospect, and immortal kin,
 "A father god, and brothers in the skies:" 435
 Elder, indeed, in time: but less remote
 In excellence, perhaps, than thought by man:
 Why greater what can fall, than what can rise?
 If still delirious, now, Lorenzo, go:
 And with thy full-blown brothers of the world, 440
 Throw scorn around thee; cast it on thy slaves!
 Thy slaves, and equals: How scorn cast on them
 Rebounds on thee! If man is mean, as man,
 Art thou a god? If fortune makes him so,
 Beware the consequence: a maxim that, 445
 Which draws a monstrous picture of mankind,
 Where, in the drapery, the man is lost;

Externals

Externals flutt'ring, and the soul forgot.
 Thy greatest glory, when dispos'd to boast,
 Boast that aloud, in which thy servants share.

450

We wisely strip the steed we mean to buy :
 Judge we, in their comparisons, of men ?
 It nought avails thee, where, but what, thou art ;
 All the distinctions of this little life

455

Are quite cutaneous, foreign to the man.
 When, thro' death's streights, earth's subtle serpents creep,
 Which wriggle into wealth, or climb renown,
 As crooked Satan the forbidden tree ;

They leave their party-coloured robe behind,
 All that now glitters, while they rear aloft
 Their brazen crests, and hiss at us below.

460

Of fortune's fucus strip them, yet alive ;
 Strip them of body, too ; nay, closer still,
 Away with all, but moral in their minds ;
 And let, what then remains, impose their name,

465

Pronounce them weak, or worthy ; great, or mean.
 How mean that snuff of glory fortune lights,
 And death puts out ! Dost thou demand a test
 (A test, at once, infallible, and short)

Of real greatness ? That man greatly lives,
 Whate'er his fate, or fame, who greatly dies :
 High flush'd with hope, where heroes shall profess.
 If this a true criterion, many courts,
 Illustrious, might afford but few grandees.

470

Th'Almighty, from his throne, on earth surveys
 Nought greater, than an honest, humble heart ;
 An humble heart, his residence ! pronounc'd
 His second seat ; and rival to the skies.

475

The private path, the secret acts of men,
 If noble, far the noblest of our lives !

480

How far above Lorenzo's glory sits
 Th'illustrious master of a name unknown ;
 Whose worth unrivall'd, and unwitn's'd, loves
 Life's sacred shades, where gods converse with men ;
 And peace, beyond the world's conception, smiles !
 As thou ! (now dark) before we part, shalt see.

485

But

But thy great soul this skulking glory scorns.
 Lorenzo's sick, but when Lorenzo's seen ;
 And, when he shrugs at public bus'ness, lies ;
 Deny'd the public eye, the public voice, 490
 As if he liv'd on others breath, he dies.
 Fain would he make the world his pedestal ;
 Mankind, the gazers, the sole figure, he,
 Knows he, that mankind praise against their will,
 And mix as much distraction as they can ? 495
 Knows he, that faithless fame her whisper has,
 As well as trumpet ! That his vanity
 Is so much tickled from not hearing all ?
 Knows this all-knower, that from itch of praise,
 Or, from an itch more sordid, when he shines, 500
 Taking his country by five-hundred ears,
 Senates at once admire him, and despise.
 With modest laughter lining loud applause,
 Which makes the smile more mortal to his fame ?
 His fame, which (like the mighty Cæsar) crown'd 505
 With laurels, in full senate, greatly falls,
 By seeming friends, that honour, and destroy.
 We rise in glory, as we sink in pride ;
 Where boasting ends, there dignity begins ;
 And yet, mistaken beyond all mistake, 510
 The blind Lorenzo's proud—of being proud ;
 And dreams himself ascending in his fall.
 An eminence, tho' fancy'd, turns the brain ;
 All vice wants hellebore ; but of all vice,
 Pride loudest calls, and for the largest bowl ; 515
 Because all other vice unlike, it flies,
 In fact, the point, in fancy, most pursu'd.
 Who court applause, oblige the world in this ;
 They gratify man's passion to refuse.
 Superior honour, when assum'd, is lost ; 520
 Ev'n good men turn banditti, and rejoice,
 Like Kouli Kan, in plunder of the proud.
 Tho' somewhat disconcerted, steady still
 To the world's cause, with half a face of joy,
 Lorenzo cries—" Be, then, ambition cast ; 525
 " Ambition's dearer far stands unimpeach'd,

" Gay pleasure ! Proud ambition is her slave :
 " For her, he soars at great, and hazards ill ;
 " For her, he fights, and bleeds, or overcomes ;
 " And paves his way, with crowns, to reach her smile : 530
 " Who can resist her charms ?—Or, should ? Lorenzo,
 What mortals shall resist, where angels yield ?
 Pleasure's the mistress of ethereal pow'rs ;
 For her contend the rival gods above ;
 Pleasure's the mistress of the world below ; 535
 And well it is for man, that pleasure charms :
 How would all stagnate, but for pleasure's ray !
 How would the frozen stream of action cease !
 What is the pulse of this so busy world ?
 The love of pleasure : that, thro' ev'ry vein, 540
 Throws motion, warmth ; and shuts out death from life.
 Tho' various are the tempers of mankind,
 Pleasure's gay family holds all in chains :
 Some most affect the black ; and some the fair ;
 Some honest pleasures court ; and some obscene. 545
 Pleasures obscene are various, as the throng
 Of passions, that can err in human hearts,
 Mistake their objects, or transgress their bounds.
 Think you there's but one whoredom ? Whoredom all,
 But when our reason licences delight. 550
 Dost doubt, Lorenzo ? Thou shalt doubt no more.
 Thy father chides thy gallantries ! yet hugs
 An ugly, common harlot in the dark ;
 A rank adulterer with others gold ;
 And that hag, Vengeance, in a corner, charms. 555
 Hatred her brothel has, as well as love,
 Where horrid epicures debauch in blood.
 Whate'er the motive, pleasure is the mark :
 For her, the black assassin draws his sword ;
 For her, dark statesmen trim their midnight lamp, 560
 To which no single sacrifice may fall ;
 For her, the saint abstains ; the miser starves ;
 The stoic proud, for pleasure, pleasure scorn'd ;
 For her, Affliction's daughters grief indulge,
 And find, or hope, a luxury in tears ; 565
 For her, guilt, shame, toil, danger, we defy ;

And,

And, with an aim voluptuous, rush on death.
Thus universal her despotic pow'r.

And as her empire wide, her praise is just.
Patron of pleasure ! doater on delight ! 570
I am thy rival ; pleasure I profess ;
Pleasure's the purpose of my gloomy song.
Pleasure is nought but virtue's gayer name ;
I wrong her still, I rate her worth too low ;
Virtue the root, and pleasure is the flow'r ; 575
And honest Epicurus' foes were fools.

But this sounds harsh, and gives the wise offence :
If o'erstrain'd wisdom still retains the name.
How knits austerity her cloudy brow,
And blames, as bold, and hazardous, the praise 580
Of pleasure, to mankind, unprais'd, too dear !
Ye modern Stoics ! hear my soft reply :—
Their senses men will trust : we can't impose :
Or, if we could, is imposition right ?
Own honey sweet, but, owning, add this sting ; 585
“ When mixt with poison, it is deadly too.”
Truth never was indebted to a lie.

Is nought but virtue to be prais'd, as good ?
Why then is health prefer'd before disease ?
What nature loves is good, without our leave : 590
And where no future drawback cries, “ beware ;”
Pleasure, tho' not from virtue, should prevail.
'Tis balm to life, and gratitude to heav'n ;
How cold our thanks for bounties unenjoy'd !
The love of pleasure is man's eldest-born, 595
Born in his cradle, living to his tomb ;
Wisdom, her younger sister, tho' more grave,
Was meant to minister, and not to mar,
Imperial pleasure, queen of human hearts.

Lorenzo, thou her majesty's renown'd, 600
Tho' uncoif'd, counsel, learned in the world !
Who think'st thyself a Murray, with disdain
May'st look on me. Yet, my Demosthenes ! †
Canst thou plead pleasure's cause as well as I ?

I 2

Know'st

† A famous Grecian orator.

Know'st thou her nature, purpose, parentage ? 605
 Attend my song, and thou shalt know them all ;
 And know thyself ; and know thyself to be
 (Strange truth !) the most abstemious man alive.
 Tell not Calista ; she will laugh thee dead ;
 Or send thee to her hermitage with L——. 610
 Absurd presumption ! Thou who never knew'st
 A serious thought, shalt thou dare dream of joy ?
 No man e'er found a happy life by chance,
 Or yawn'd it into being with a wish ;
 Or, with the snout of grov'ling appetite, 615
 E'er smelt it out, and grubb'd it from the dirt.
 An art it is, and must be learnt ; and learnt
 With unremitting effort, or be lost ;
 And leave us perfect blockheads, in our bliss.
 The clouds may drop down titles and estates ; 620
 Wealth may seek us : but wisdom must be sought :
 Sought before all ; but (how unlike all else
 We seek on earth !) 'tis never sought in vain.
 First, pleasure's birth, rise, strength, grandeur, see :
 Brought forth by wisdom, nurs'd by discipline, 625
 By patience taught, by perseverance crown'd,
 She rears her head majestic ; round her throne,
 Erected in the bosom of the just,
 Each virtue, list'd, forms her manly guard.
 For what are virtues ? (formidable name !) 630
 What, but the fountain, or defence, of joy ?
 Why, then, commanded ? Need mankind commands,
 At once to merit, and to make, their bliss ?—
 Great Legislator ! scarce so great, as kind ?
 If men are rational, and love delight, 635
 Thy gracious law but flatters human choice ;
 In the transgression lies the penalty ;
 And they the most indulge, who most obey.
 Of pleasure, next, the final cause explore :
 Its mighty purpose, its important end. 640
 Not to turn human, brutal, but to build
 Divine on human, pleasure came from heav'n.
 In aid to reason was the goddess sent ;
 To call up all its strength by such a charm.

Pleasure,

Pleasure, first succours virtue ; in return, 645
 Virtue gives pleasure an eternal reign.
 What, but the pleasure of food, friendship, faith,
 Supports life nat'ral, civil, and divine ?
 'Tis from the pleasure of repast, we live ;
 'Tis from the pleasure of applause, we please ; 650
 'Tis from the pleasure of belief, we pray.
 (All pray'r would cease, if unbeliev'd the prize ;)
 It serves ourselves, our species, and our God ;
 And to serve more, is past the sphere of man.
 Glide then, for ever pleasure's sacred stream ! 655
 Thro' Eden, as Euphrates ran, it runs,
 And fosters ev'ry growth of happy life ;
 Makes a new Eden where it flows—but such
 As must be lost, Lorenzo, by thy fall.
 “ What mean I by thy fall ? ”—Thou'lt shortly see 660
 While pleasure's nature is at large display'd ;
 Already sung her origin and ends.
 Those glorious ends, by kind, or by degree,
 When pleasure violates, 'tis then a vice,
 And vengeance too ; it hastens into pain : 665
 From due refreshment, life, health, reason, joy ;
 From wild excess, pain, grief, distraction, death ;
 Heav'n's justice this proclaims ; and that, her love.
 What greater evil can I wish my foe,
 Than his full draught of pleasure, from a cask 670
 Unbroach'd by just authority, ungaug'd
 By temperance, by reason unrefin'd ?
 A thousand dæmons lurk within the lee.
 Heav'n, others, and ourselves ! Uninjur'd these,
 Drink deep ; the deeper, then, the more divine ; 675
 Angels are angels from indulgence there ;
 'Tis unrepenting pleasure makes a god.
 Dost think thyself a god from other joys ?
 A victim rather ! shortly sure to bleed.
 The wrong must mourn : can heav'n's appointments fail ? 680
 Can man outwit Omnipotence ? strike out
 A self-wrought happiness unmeant by him
 Who made us, and the world we should enjoy ?
 Who forms an instrument, ordains from whence

Its dissonance, or harmony, shall rise.
 Heav'n bid the soul this mortal frame inspire ;
 Bid virtue's ray divine inspire the soul
 With unprecipitous flows of vital joy ;
 And, without breathing, man as well might hope
 For life, as, without piety, for peace.

685

“ Is virtue, then, and piety the same ?—
 No ; piety is more ; 'tis virtue's source ;
 Mother of ev'ry worth, as that, of joy.
 Men of the world this doctrine ill digest ;
 They smile at piety ; yet boast aloud
 Good will to men ; nor know they strive to part
 What nature joins ; and thus confute themselves.
 With piety begins all good on earth ;
 'Tis the first-born of rationality.

690

Conscience, her first law broken, wounded lies,
 Enfeebled, lifeless, impotent to good ;
 A feign'd affection bounds her utmost pow'r.
 Some we can't love, but for th' Almighty's sake ;
 A foe to God was ne'er true friend to man ;
 Some sinister intent taints all he does ;
 And, in his kindest actions, he's unkind.

700

On piety, humanity, is built ;
 And, on humanity, much happiness ;
 And yet still more on piety itself.
 A soul in commerce with her God, is heav'n :
 Feels not the tumults and the shocks of life ;
 The whirls of passions, and the strokes of heart ;
 A Deity believ'd, is joy begun ;
 A Deity ador'd, is joy advanc'd ;
 A Deity belov'd, is joy matur'd.
 Each branch of piety delight inspires ;
 Faith builds a bridge from this world to the next,
 O'er death's dark gulph, and all its horror hides ;
 Praise, the sweet exhalation of our joy,
 That joy exalts, and makes it sweeter still ;
 Pray'r ardent opens heav'n, lets down a stream
 Of glory on the consecrated hour
 Of man, in audience with the Deity.

705

710

715

720

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

175

Who worships the great God, that instant joins
The first in heav'n, and sets his foot on hell. 725

Lorenzo, when wast thou at church before ?
Thou think'st the service long : but is it just ?
Tho' just, unwelcome : thou hadst rather tread
Unhallow'd ground ; the muse, to win thine ear,
Must take an air less solemn. She complies. 730

Good conscience ! at the sound the world retires ;
Verse disaffects it, and Lorenzo smiles ;
Yet has she her seraglio full of charms :
And such as age shall heighten, not impair.
Art thou dejected ? Is thy mind o'ercast ? 735

Amid her fair ones, thou the fairest choose,
To chase thy gloom.—“ Go fix some weighty truth ;
“ Chain down some passion ; do some gen'rous good ;
“ Teach ignorance to see, or grief to smile ;
“ Correct thy friend ; befriend thy greatest foe ; 740

“ Or with warm heart, and confidence divine,
“ Spring up, and lay strong hold on him who made thee.”
—Thy gloom is scatter'd, sprightly spirits flow,
Tho' wither'd is thy vine, and harp unstrung.

Dost call the bowl, the viol, and the dance, 745
Loud mirths, mad laughter ? Wretched comforters !
Physicians ! more than half of thy disease.

Laughter, tho' never censur'd yet as sin
(Pardon a thought that only seems severe)
Is half-immoral : is it much indulg'd ? 750

By venting spleen, or dissipating thought,
It shews a scorner, or it makes a fool ;
And sins, as hurting others, or ourselves.
'Tis pride, or emptiness, applies the straw,
That tickles little minds to mirth effuse ; 755

Of grief approaching, the portentous sign !
The house of laughter makes a house of woe.

A man triumphant is a monstrous sight :
A man dejected is a sight as mean.
What cause for triumph, where such ills abound ? 760

What for dejection, where presides a pow'r,
Who call'd us into being to be blest ?
So grieve, as conscious, grief may rise to joy :

So joy, as conscious, joy to grief may fall.
 Most true, a wise man never will be sad : 765
 But neither will sonorous, bubbling mirth,
 A shallow stream of happiness betray :
 Too happy to be sportive, he's serene.
 Yet wouldst thou laugh (but at thy own expence)
 This counsel strange should I presume to give— 770
 " Retire, and read thy Bible, to be gay."
 There truths abound of sov'reign aid to peace ;
 Ah ! do not prize them less, because inspir'd,
 As thou, and thine, are apt and proud to do.
 If not inspir'd, that pregnant page had stood, 775
 Time's treasure ! and the wonder of the wise !
 Thou think'st, perhaps, thy soul alone at stake ;
 Alas !—Should men mistake thee for a fool ;—
 What man of taste for genius, wisdom, truth,
 Tho' tender of thy fame, could interpose ? 780
 Believe me, sense, here, acts a double part,
 And the true critic is a Christian too.
 But these, thou think'st, are gloomy paths to joy.—
 True joy in sunshine ne'er was found at first ;
 They, first, themselves offend, who greatly please ; 785
 And travel only gives us sound repose.
 Heav'n sells all pleasure ; effort is the price ;
 The joys of conquest, are the joys of man ;
 And glory the victorious laurel spreads
 O'er pleasure's pure, perpetual, placid stream. 790
 There is a time, when toil must be prefer'd,
 Or joy, by mis-tim'd fondness, is undone.
 A man of pleasure is a man of pains.
 Thou wilt not take the trouble to be blest.
 False joys, indeed, are born from want of thought ; 795
 From thought's full bent, and energy, the true ;
 And that demands a mind in equal poize,
 Remote from gloomy grief, and glaring joy.
 Much joy not only speaks small happiness,
 But happiness that shortly must expire. 800
 Can joy, unbottom'd in reflection, stand ?
 And, in a tempest, can reflection live ?
 Can joy, like thine, secure itself an hour ?

Can

Can joy, like thine, meet accident unshock'd,
 Or ope the door to honest poverty ? 805
 Or talk with threat'ning death, and not turn pale ?
 In such a world, and such a nature, these
 Are needful fundamentals of delight :
 These fundamentals give delight indeed ;
 Delight, pure, delicate, and durable ; 810
 Delight, unshaken, masculine, divine ;
 A constant, and a sound, but serious joy.
 Is joy the daughter of severity ?
 It is :—Yet far my doctrine from severe.
 “ Rejoice for ever : ” It becomes a man ; 815
 Exalts, and sets him nearer to the gods.
 “ Rejoice for ever,” nature cries, “ rejoice ; ”
 And drinks to man, in her nectareous cup,
 Mix'd up of delicacies for ev'ry sense ;
 To the great Founder of the bounteous feast, 820
 Drinks glory, gratitude, eternal praise ;
 And he that will not pledge her, is a churl.
 Ill firmly to support, good fully taste,
 Is the whole science of felicity :
 Yet sparing pledge : her bowl is not the best 825
 Mankind can boast.—“ A rational repast ;
 “ Exertion, vigilance, a mind in arms,
 “ A military discipline of thought,
 “ To foil temptation in the doubtful field ;
 “ And ever-waking ardour for the right ; 830
 'Tis these, first give, then guard, a cheerful heart.
 Nought that is right, think little ; well aware,
 What reason bids, God bids ; by his command
 How aggrandiz'd, the smallest thing we do !
 Thus, nothing is insipid to the wise ; 835
 To thee, insipid all, but what is mad ;
 Joys season'd high, and tasting strong of guilt.
 “ Mad ! (thou reply'st, with indignation fir'd)
 “ Of ancient sages proud to tread the steps,
 “ I follow nature.”—Follow nature still, 840
 But look it be thine own : Is conscience, then,
 No part of nature ? Is she not supreme ?

Thou regicide ! O raise her from the dead !

Then, follow nature ; and resemble God.

When, spite of conscience, pleasure is pursu'd,

345

Man's nature is unnaturally pleas'd :

And what's unnatural, is painful too

At intervals, and must disgust e'en thee !

The fact thou know'st ; but, not, perhaps, the cause.

Virtue's foundations with the world's were laid ;

350

Heav'n mix'd her with our make, and twisted close

Her sacred int'rests with the strings of life.

Who breaks her awful mandate, shocks himself,

His better self : And is it greater pain,

Our soul should murmur, or our dust repine ?

355

And one in their eternal war, must bleed.

If one must suffer, which should least be spar'd ?

The pains of mind surpass the pains of sense.

Ask, then, the gout, what torment is in guilt.

The joys of sense to mental joys are mean :

360

Sense on the present only feeds ; the soul

On past, and future, forages for joy.

'Tis her's, by retrospect, thro' time to range ;

And forward time's great sequel to survey.

Could human courts take vengeance on the mind,

365

Axes might rust, and racks, and gibbets, fall ;

Guard, then, thy mind, and leave the rest to fate.

Lorenzo ! wilt thou never be a man ?

The man is dead, who for the body lives,

Lur'd, by the beating of his pulse, to list

370

With ev'ry lust, that wars against his peace ;

And sets him quite at variance with himself.

Thyself, first, know ; then love : A self there is

Of virtue fond, that kindles at her charms.

A self there is, as fond of ev'ry vice,

375

While ev'ry virtue wounds it to the heart ;

Humility degrades it, justice robs,

Blest bounty beggars it, fair truth betrays,

And godlike magnanimity destroys.

This self, when rival to the former, scorn ;

380

When not in competition, kindly treat,

Defend it, feed it :—But when virtue bids,

Toss

Toss it, or to the fowls, or to the flames.
And why ? 'Tis love of pleasure bids thee bleed ;
Comply, or own self-love extinct, or blind.

885

For what is vice ? Self-love in a mistake :
A poor blind merchant buying joys too dear.
And virtue, what ? 'Tis self-love in her wits,
Quite skilful in the market of delight.
Self-love's good sense is love of that dread pow'r,
From whom she springs, and all she can enjoy.
Other self-love is but disguis'd self-hate ;
More mortal than the malice of our foes ;
A self-hate, now, scarce felt ; then felt full sore,
When being, curst ; extinction, loud implor'd ;
And ev'ry thing prefer'd to what we are.

890

895

Yet this self-love Lorenzo makes his choice ;
And, in this choice triumphant, boasts of joy.
How is his want of happiness betray'd,
By disaffection to the present hour !
Imagination wanders far a-field :

900

The future pleases : Why ? The present pains.—
“ But that's a secret.”—Yes, which all men know ;
And know from thee, discover'd unawares.

Thy ceaseless agitation, restless rolls
From cheat to cheat, impatient of a pause ;
What is it ?—'Tis the cradle of the soul,
From instinct sent, to rock her in disease,
Which her physician, reason, will not cure.
A poor expedient ! yet thy best ; and while
It mitigates thy pain, it owns it too.

905

910

Such are Lorenzo's wretched remedies !
The weak have remedies ; the wise have joys.
Superior wisdom is superior bliss.
And what sure mark distinguishes the wise ?
Consistent wisdom ever wills the same !

915

Thy fickle wish is ever on the wing.
Sick of herself, is folly's character ;
As wisdom's is, a modest self-applause.
A change of evils is thy good supreme ;
Nor, but in motion, canst thou find thy rest.
Man's greatest strength is shewn in standing still.

920

The first sure symptom of a mind in health,
Is rest of heart, and pleasure felt at home.
False pleasure from abroad her joys imports ;
Rich from within, and self-sustain'd, the true.

925

The true is fix'd, and solid as a rock ;
Slipp'ry the false, and tossing, as the wave.
This, a wild wanderer on earth, like Cain ;
That, like the fabled, self-enamour'd boy *,
Home-contemplation her supreme delight ;
She dreads an interruption from without,
Smit with her own condition ; and the more
Intense she gazes, still it charms the more.

930

No man is happy, till he thinks, on earth
There breathes not a more happy than himself :
Then envy dies, and love o'erflows on all ;
And love o'erflowing makes an angel here.
Such angels all, entitled to repose

935

On him who governs fate : Tho' tempest frowns,
Tho' nature shakes, how soft to lean on heav'n !
To lean on him, on whom archangels lean !
With inward eyes, and silent as the grave,
They stand collecting ev'ry beam of thought,
Till their hearts kindle with divine delight ;
For all their thoughts, like angels, seen of old
In Israel's dream, come from, and go to, heav'n † :
Hence, are they studious of sequest' red scenes !
While noise, and dissipation, comfort thee.

940

945

Were all men happy, revellings would cease,
That opiate for inquietude within.

950

Lorenzo! never man was truly blest,
But it compos'd, and gave him such a cast,
As folly might mistake for want of joy.

A cast, unlike the triumph of the proud ;
A modest aspect, and a smile at heart.

955

O for a joy from thy Philander's spring !
A spring perennial, rising in the breast,
And permanent, as pure ! No turbid stream
Of rapt'rous exultation, swelling high ;

960

Which

* Narcissus.

† Genesis xxviii. 12,

Which, like land-floods, impetuous pour awhile,
 Then sink at once, and leave us in the mire.
 What does the man, who transient joy prefers ?
 What, but prefer the bubbles to the stream ?

Vain are all sudden fallies of delight ; 965
 Convulsions of a weak distemper'd joy.

Joy's a fix'd state ; a tenure, not a start.
 Bliss there is none, but unprecious bliss :
 That is the gem : sell all, and purchase that.
 Why go a begging to contingencies, 970
 Not gain'd with ease, nor safely lov'd, if gain'd ?
 At good fortuitous, draw back, and pause ;
 Suspect it ; what thou canst ensure, enjoy ;
 And nought but what thou giv'st thyself, is sure.
 Reason perpetuates joy that reason gives, 975
 And makes it as immortal as herself :
 To mortals, nought immortal, but their worth.

Worth, conscious worth ! should absolutely reign,
 And other joys ask leave for their approach ;
 Nor, unexamined, ever leave obtain. 980
 Thou art all anarchy ; a mob of joys
 Wage war, and perish in intestine broils ;
 Not the least promise of internal peace !
 No bosom-comfort ! or unborrow'd bliss !
 Thy thoughts are vagabonds : all outward-bound, 985
 Mid sands, and rocks, and storms, to cruise for pleasure,
 If gain'd, dear-bought ; and better miss'd than gain'd.
 Much pain must expiate, what much pain procur'd.
 Fancy, and sense, from an infected shore,
 Thy cargo bring ; and pestilence the prize. 990
 Then, such thy thirst (insatiable thirst !
 By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more !)
 Fancy still cruises, when poor sense is tir'd.

Imagination is the Paphian shop,
 Where feeble happiness, like Vulcan, lame, 995
 Bids foul ideas, in their dark recess,
 And hot as hell (which kindled the black fires)
 With wanton art, those fatal arrows form,
 Which murder all thy time, health, wealth, and fame.
 Wouldst thou receive them, other thoughts there are, 1000
 On

On angel-wing, descending from above,
Which these, with art divine, would counterwork,
And form celestial armour for thy peace.

In this is seen imagination's guilt ;
But who can count her follies ? She betrays thee, 1005
To think in grandeur there is something great.
For works of curious art, and ancient fame,
Thy genius hungers, elegantly pain'd ;
And foreign climes must cater for thy taste.
Hence, what disaster ! — Tho' the price was paid, 1010
That persecuting priest, the Turk of Rome,
Whose foot (ye gods !) tho' cloven, must be kiss'd,
Detain'd thy dinner on the Latian shore ;
(Such is the fate of honest Protestants !)
And poor magnificence is starv'd to death. 1015
Hence just resentment, indignation, ire ! —
Be pacify'd ; if outward things are great,
'Tis magnanimity great things to scorn ;
Pompous expences, and parades august,
And courts ; that insalubrious soil to peace. 1020
True happiness ne'er enter'd at an eye ;
True happiness resides in things unseen.
No smiles of fortune ever blest the bad,
Nor can her frowns rob innocence of joys :
That jewel wanting, triple crowns are poor : 1025
So tell his holiness *, and be reveng'd.

Pleasure, we both agree, is man's chief good ;
Our only contest, what deserves the name.
Give pleasure's name to nought, but what has pass'd
Th'authentic seal of reason (which, like Yorke, 1030
Demurs on what it passes) and defies
The tooth of time ; when past, a pleasure still ;
Dearer on trial, lovelier for its age,
And doubly to be priz'd, as it promotes
Our future, while it forms our present, joy. 1035
Some joys the future overcast ; and some
Throw all their beams that way, and gild the tomb.
Some joys endear eternity ; some give

Abhorr'd

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

183

Abhorr'd annihilation dreadful charms.
Are rival joys contending for thy choice ?
Consult thy whole existence, and be safe ;
That oracle will put all doubt to flight.
Short is the lesson, tho' my lecture long ;
Be good——and let Heav'n answer for the rest.

1040

Yet, with a sigh o'er all mankind, I grant,
In this our day of proof, our land of hope,
The good man has his clouds that intervene ;
Clouds, that obscure his sublunary day,
But never conquer : Ev'n the best must own,
Patience, and resignation, are the pillars
Of human peace on earth. The pillars, these :
But those of Seth not more remote from thee,
Till this heroic lesson thou hast learnt ;
To frown at pleasure, and to smile in pain.
Fir'd at the prospect of unclouded bliss,
Heav'n in reversion, like the sun, as yet
Beneath the horizon, cheers us in this world ;
It sheds, on souls susceptible of light,
The glorious dawn of our eternal day.

1045

1050

1055

“ This (says Lorenzo) is a fair harangue :
“ But can harangues blow back strong nature's stream ?
“ Or stem the tide Heav'n pushes thro' our veins,
“ Which sweeps away man's impotent resolves,
“ And lays his labour level with the world ?”

1060

Themselves men make their comment on mankind ?
And think nought is, but what they find at home :
Thus weakness to chimera turns the truth.
Nothing romantic has the muse prescrib'd.

1065

* Above, Lorenzo saw the man of earth,
The mortal man ; and wretched was the sight.
To balance that, to comfort, and exalt,
Now see the man immortal : him I mean,
Who lives as such ; whose heart, full bent on Heav'n
Leans all that way, his bias to the stars.

1070

The world's dark shades, in contrast set, shall raise
His lustre more ; tho' bright without a foil :

1075

Observe

• In a former night.

Observe his awful portrait, and admire ;
Nor stop at wonder ; imitate, and live.

Some angel guide my pencil, while I draw,
What nothing less than angel can exceed,
A man on earth devoted to the skies ;
Like ships at sea, while in, above the world.

1080

With aspect mild, and elevated eye,
Behold him seated on a mount serene,
Above the fogs of sense, and passion's storm ;
All the black cares, and tumults, of this life
(Like harmless thunders, breaking at his feet)
Excite his pity, not impair his peace.

1085

Earth's genuine sons, the scepter'd, and the slave,
A mingled mob ! a wand'ring herd ! he sees,
Bewilder'd in the vale ; in all unlike !
His full reverse in all ! What higher praise ?
What stronger demonstration of the right ?

1090

The present all their care ; the future, his.
When public welfare calls, or private want,
They give to fame ; his bounty he conceals.
Their virtues vanish nature ; his exalt.

1095

Mankind's esteem they court ; and he, his own.
Theirs, the wild chace of false felicities ;
His, the compos'd possession of the true.

1100

Alike throughout is his consistent piece,
All of one colour, and an even thread ;
While party-colour'd shreds of happiness,
With hideous gaps between, patch up for them
A madman's robe ; each puff of fortune blows
The tatters by, and shews their nakedness.

1105

He sees with other eyes than theirs : where they
Behold a fun, he spies a deity ;
What makes them only smile, makes him adore.
Where they see mountains, he but atoms sees ;
An empire, in his balance, weighs a grain.
They things terrestrial worship, as divine ;
His hopes immortal blow them by, as dust,
That dims his sight, and shortens his survey,
Which longs, in infinite, to lose all bound.
Titles and honours (if they prove his fate)

1115

He

He lays aside to find his dignity ;
 No dignity they find in aught besides.
 They triumph in externals (which conceal
 Man's real glory) proud of an eclipse. 1120
 Himself too much he prizes to be proud,
 And nothing thinks so great in man, as man.
 Too dear he holds his int'rest, to neglect
 Another's welfare, or his right invade ;
 Their int'rest, like a lion, lives on prey. 1125
 They kindle at the shadow of a wrong ;
 Wrong he sustains with temper, looks on Heav'n,
 Nor stoops to think his injurer his foe ;
 Nought, but what wounds his virtue, wounds his peace.
 A cover'd heart their character defends ; 1130
 A cover'd heart denies him half his praise.
 With shak'dness his innocence agrees ;
 While their broad foilage testifies their fall.
 Their no-joys end, where his full feast begins :
 His joys create, theirs murder, future bliss. 1135
 To triumph in existence, his alone ;
 And his alone, triumphantly to think
 His true existence is not yet begun.
 His glorious course was, yesterday, complete :
 Death, then, was welcome ; yet life still is sweet. 1140
 But nothing charms Lorenzo, like the firm,
 Undaunted breast—And whose is that high praise ?
 They yield to pleasure, tho' they danger brave,
 And shew no fortitude, but in the field ;
 If there they shew it, 'tis for glory shewn ; 1145
 Nor will that cordial always man their hearts.
 A cordial his sustains, that cannot fail :
 By pleasure unsubst'd, unbroke by pain,
 He shares in that Omnipotence he trusts.
 All-bearing, all-attempting, till he falls ; 1150
 And when he falls, writes VICI * on his shield.
 From magnanimity, all fear above ;
 From nobler recompence, above applause ;
 Which owes to man's short out-look all its charms.

Backward

* I have conquer'd.

Backward to credit what he never felt, 1155
 Lorenzo cries,—“Where shines this miracle?
 “From what root rises this immortal man?”
 A root that grows not in Lorenzo’s ground;
 The root disiect, nor wonder at the flow’r.
 He follows nature (not like * thee!) and shews us 1160
 An uninverted system of a man.
 His appetite wears reason’s golden chain,
 And finds, in due restraint, its luxury.
 His passion, like an eagle well-reclaim’d,
 Is taught to fly at nought, but infinite. 1165
 Patient his hope, unanxious is his care,
 His caution fearless, and his grief (if grief
 The gods ordain) a stranger to despair.
 And why?—Because affection, more than meet,
 His wisdom leaves not disengag’d from Heav’n. 1170
 Those secondary goods that smile on earth,
 He, loving, in proportion, loves in peace.
 They most the world enjoy, who least admire.
 His understanding ’scapes the common clouds
 Of fumes, arising from a boiling breast. 1175
 His head is clear, because his heart is cool,
 By worldly competitions uninflam’d.
 The mod’rate movements of his soul admit
 Distinct ideas, and matur’d debate,
 An eye impartial, and an evil scale; 1180
 Whence judgment sound, and unrepenting choice.
 Thus, in a double sense, the good are wise;
 On its own dunghill, wiser than the world.
 What, then, the world? It must be doubly weak;
 Strange truth! as soon would they believe the creed. 1185
 Yet thus it is; nor otherwise can be;
 So far from aught romantic what I sing.
 Bliss has no being, virtue has no strength,
 But from the prospect of immortal life.
 Who thinks earth all, or (what weighs just the same) 1190
 Who cares no further, must prize what it yields;
 Fond of its fancies; proud of its parades.
 Who

* See page 177, line 840.

NIGHT THE EIGHTH.

187

Who thinks earth nothing, can't its charms admire ;

He can't a foe, tho' most malignant hate,

Because that hate would prove his greater foe.

1195

'Tis hard for them (yet who so loudly boast
Good-will to men ?) to love their dearest friend ;

For may not he invade their good supreme,

Where the least jealousy turns love to gall ?

All shines to them, that for a season shines.

1200

Each act, each thought he questions, " what its weight,

" Its colour what, a thousand ages hence ?" —

And what is there appears, he deems it now.

Hence, pure are the recesses of his soul.

The god-like man has nothing to conceal.

1205

His virtue, constitutionally deep,

Has habit's firmness, and affection's flame ;

Angels ally'd, descend to feed the fire ;

And death, which others slay, makes him a god.

And now, Lorenzo, bigot of the world !

1210

Wont to disdain poor bigots, caught by Heav'n !

Stand by thy scorn, and be reduc'd to nought :

For what art thou ?—Thou boaster ! while thy glare,

Thy gaudy grandeur, and mere worldly worth,

Like a broad mist, at distance strikes us most ;

1215

And, like a mist, is nothing when at hand ;

His merit, like a mountain, on approach,

Swells more, and rises nearer to the skies,

By promise, now, and, by possession, soon

(Too soon, too much, it cannot be) his own.

1220

From this thy just annihilation rise,

Lorenzo, rise to something, by reply.

The world, thy client, listens, and expects ;

And longs to crown thee with immortal praise.

Canst thou be silent ? No ; for wit is thine ;

1225

And wit talks most, when least she has to say,

And reason interrupts not her career.

She'll say—That mists above the mountains rise ;

And, with a thousand pleasantries, amuse :

She'll sparkle, puzzle, flutter, raise a dust,

1230

And fly conviction, in the dust she rais'd.

Wit,

Wit, how delicious to man's dainty taste !
 'Tis precious, as the vehicle of sense ;
 But, as its substitute, a dire disease.
 Pernicious talent ! Flatter'd by the world, 1235
 By the blind world, which thinks the talent rare.
 Wisdom is rare, Lorenzo, wit abounds ;
 Passion can give it ; sometimes wine inspires
 The lucky flash : and madness rarely fails.
 Whatever cause the spirit strongly stirs, 1240
 Confers the bays, and rivals thy renown.
 For thy renown, 'twere well, was this the worst ;
 Chance often hits it, and, pique the more,
 See dulness, blundering on vivacities,
 Shakes her sage head at the calamity, 1245
 Which has expos'd, and let her down to thee.
 But wisdom, awful wisdom ! which inspects,
 Discerns, compares, weighs, separates, infers,
 Seizes the right, and holds it to the last ;
 How rare ! In senates, synods, sought in vain ; 1250
 Or if there found, 'tis sacred to the few ;
 While a lewd prostitute to multitudes,
 Frequent, as fatal, wit : in civil life,
 Wit makes an enterprizer ; sense a man.
 Wit hates authority ; commotion loves, 1255
 And thinks herself the lightning of the storm.
 In states, 'tis dangerous ; in religion death :
 Shall wit turn Christian, when the dull believe ?
 Sense is our helmet, wit is but the plume ;
 The plume exposes, 'tis our helmet saves. 1260
 Sense is the di'mond, weighty, solid, sound ;
 When cut by wit, it casts a brighter beam ;
 Yet, wit apart, it is a di'mond still.
 Wit, widow'd of good sense, is worse than nought ;
 It hoists more sail to run against a rock. 1265
 Thus, a half-Chesterfield is quite a fool ;
 Whom dull fools scorn, and bless their want of wit.
 How ruinous the rock I warn thee shun,
 Where sirens sit, to sing thee to thy fate !
 A joy, in which our reason bears no part, 1270
 Is but a sorrow tickling, ere it stings.

Let not the cooings of the world allure thee ;
 Which of her lovers ever found her true ?
 Happy of this bad world who little know !—
 And yet, we much must know her, to be safe. 1275
 To know the world, not love her, is thy point ;
 She gives but little, nor that little, long.
 There is, I grant, a triumph of the pulse ;
 A dance of spirits, a mere froth of joy,
 Our thoughtless agitation's idle child, 1280
 That mantles high, that sparkles, and expires,
 Leaving the soul more vapid than before.
 An animal ovation ! such as holds
 No commerce with our reason, but subsists
 On juices, thro' the well-ton'd tubes, well strain'd ; 1285
 A nice machine ! scarce ever tun'd aright ;
 And when it jars—thy sirens sing no more ;
 Thy dance is done ; the demi-god is thrown
 (Short apotheosis !) beneath the man,
 In coward gloom immers'd, or fell despair. 1290
 Art thou yet dull enough despair to dread,
 And startle at destruction ? If thou art,
 Accept a buckler, take it to the field ;
 (A field of battle is this mortal life !)
 When danger threatens, lay it on thy heart ; 1295
 A single sentence proof against the world.
 " Soul, body, fortune ! Ev'ry good pertains
 " To one of these ; but prize not all alike ;
 " The goods of fortune to thy body's health,
 " Body to soul, and soul submit to God." 1300
 Wouldst thou build lasting happiness ? Do this ;
 Th'inverted pyramid can never stand.
 Is this truth doubtful ? It outshines the sun ;
 Nay, the sun shines not, but to shew us this,
 The single lesson of mankind on earth. 1305
 And yet—Yet, what ! No news ! Mankind is mad ;
 Such mighty numbers list against the right
 (And what can't numbers, when bewitch'd, atchieve ?)
 They talk themselves to something like belief,
 That all earth's joys are theirs : as Athens' fool 1310
 Grinn'd from the port, on ev'ry sail his own.
 They

They grin ; but wherefore ? And how long the laugh ?
 Half ignorance, their mirth ; and half a lie ;
 To cheat the world, and cheat themselves, they smile.
 Hard either task ! The most abandon'd own, 1315
 That others, if abandon'd, are undone :
 Then, for themselves, the moment reason wakes
 (And Providence denies it long repose)
 O how laborious is their gaiety !
 They scarce can swallow their ebullient spleen, 1320
 Scarce muster patience to support the farce,
 And pump sad laughter, till the curtain falls.
 Scarce, did I say ? Some cannot sit it out ;
 Oft their own daring hands the curtain draw,
 And shew us what their joy, by their despair. 1325
 The clotted hair ! gor'd breast ! blaspheming eye !
 Its impious fury still alive in death !—
 Shut, shut the shocking scene.—But Heav'n denies
 A cover to such guilt ; and so should man.
 Look round, Lorenzo ! See the reeking blade, 1330
 Th'invenom'd phial, and the fatal ball ;
 The strangling cord, and suffocating stream ;
 The loathsome rottenness, and foul decays
 From raging riot (slower suicides !)
 And pride in these, more execrable still !— 1335
 How horrid all to thought !—But horrors, these,
 That vouch the truth ; and aid my feeble song.
 From vice, sense, fancy, no man can be blest ;
 Bliss is too great, to lodge within an hour :
 When an immortal being aims at bliss, 1340
 Duration is essential to the name.
 O for a joy from reason ! joy from that,
 Which makes man, man ; and, exercis'd aright,
 Will make him more : a bounteous joy ! that gives,
 And promises ; that weaves, with art divine, 1345
 The richest prospect into present peace :
 A joy ambitious ! joy in common held
 With thrones ethereal, and their greater far :
 A joy high-privileg'd from chance, time, death !
 A joy, which death shall double ! judgment crown 1350
 Crown'd higher, and still higher, at each stage,

Thro'

Thro' blest eternity's long day ; yet still,
Not more remote from sorrow, than from him,
Whose lavish hand, whose love stupendous pours
So much of deity on guilty dust.

1355

There, O my Lucia ! may I meet thee there,
Where not thy presence can improve my bliss !

Affects not this the fates of the world ?

Can nought affect them, but what fools them too ?

Eternity depending on an hour,

1360

Makes serious thought man's wisdom, joy, and praise.

Nor need you blush (tho' sometimes your designs

May shun the light) at your designs on Heav'n :

Sole point ! where over-bashful is your blame.

Are you not wise ?—You know you are. Yet hear

1365

One truth, amid your num'rous schemes, mislaid,

Or over-look'd, or thrown aside, if seen ;

" Our schemes to plan by this world, or the next,

" Is the sole difference between wise, and fool."

All worthy men will weigh you in this scale ;

1370

What wonder, then, if they pronounce you light !

Is their esteem alone not worth your care ?

Accept my simple scheme of common sense :

Thus, save your fame, and make two worlds your own.

The world replies not ! but the world persists ;

1375

And puts the cause off to the longest day,

Planning evasions for the day of doom.

So far, at that re-hearing, from redress,

They then turn witnesses against themselves.

Hear that, Lorenzo ! nor be wise to-morrow.

1380

Haste, haste ! A man by nature is, in haste :

For who shall answer for another hour ?

'Tis highly prudent, to make one sure friend ;

And that thou canst not do, this side the skies.

Ye sons of earth ! (nor willing to be more !)

1385

Since verse you think from priestcraft somewhat free,

Thus, in an age so gay, the muse plain truths

(Truths, which, at church, you might have heard in prose)

Has ventur'd into light ; well-pleas'd the verse

Should be forgot, if you the truths retain ;

1390

And crown her with your welfare, not your praise.

But

But praise she need not fear : I see my fate ;
 And headlong leap, like Curtius, down the gulph.
 Since many an ample volume, mighty tome,
 Must die ; and die unwept ; O thou minute,
 Devoted page ! go forth among thy foes ;
 Go, nobly proud of martyrdom for truth,
 And die a double death : Mankind, incens'd,
 Denies thee long to live : Nor shalt thou rest,
 When thou art dead ; in Stygian shades arraign'd
 By Lucifer, as traitor to his throne ;
 And bold blasphemer of his friend,—the world ;
 The world, whose legions cost him slender play,
 And volunteers around his banner swarm ;
 Prudent, as Prussia, in her zeal for Gaul.

1395

1400

1405

“ Are all, then, fools ? ” Lorenzo cries.—Yes, all,
 But such as hold this doctrine (new to thee !)
 “ The mother of true wisdom is the will ; ”
 The noblest intellect, a fool without it.
 World-wisdom much has done, and more may do,
 In arts and sciences, in wars and peace ;
 But art and science, like thy wealth, will leave thee,
 And make thee twice a beggar at thy death.
 This is the most indulgence can afford ;—
 “ Thy wisdom all can do, but—make thee wise.
 Nor think this censure is severe on thee ;
 Satan thy master, I dare call a dunce.

1410

1415

End of Night the Eighth.

THE
CONSOLATION.

Containing, among other Things,

- I. *A Moral Survey of the Nocturnal Heavens.*
II. *A Night-Address to the Deity.*

Inscribed to his Grace

THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

—*Fatis Contraria Fata rependens.* VIRG.

NIGHT THE NINTH.

AS when a traveller, a long day past
In painful search of what he cannot find,
At night's approach, content with the next cot,
There ruminates, awhile, his labour lost ;
Then cheers his heart with what his fate affords,
And chants his sonnet to deceive the time,
Till the due season calls him to repose :
Thus I, long travell'd in the ways of men,
And dancing, with the rest, the giddy maze,
Where disappointment smiles at hope's career ;

K

10
Warn'd

Warn'd by the languor of life's ev'ning ray,
 At length have hous'd me in an humble shed ;
 Where, future wand'ring banish'd from my thought,
 And waiting, patient, the sweet hour of rest ;
 I chace the moments with a serious song.
 Song sooths our pains ; and age has pains to sooth.

15

When age, care, crime, and friends, embrac'd at heart,
 Torn from my bleeding breast, and death's dark shade,
 Which hovers o'er me, quench th'ethereal fire ;
 Canst thou, O night ! indulge one labour more ?
 One labour more indulge ! then sleep, my strain !
 Till, haply, wak'd by Raphael's golden lyre,
 Where night, death, age, care, crime, and sorrow, cease
 To bear a part in everlasting lays ;
 Tho' far, far higher set, in aim, I trust,
 Symphonious to this humble prelude here.

20

25

Has not the muse asserted pleasures pure,
 Like those above, exploding other joys ?
 Weigh what was urg'd, Lorenzo ! Fairly weigh ;
 And tell me, hast thou cause to triumph still ?
 I think thou wilt forbear a boast so bold.

30

But if, beneath the favour of mistake,
 Thy smile's sincere, not more sincere can be
 Lorenzo's smile, than my compassion for him.
 The sick in body call for aid : the sick
 In mind are covetous of more disease :
 And when at worst, they dream themselves quite well.
 To know ourselves diseas'd, is half our cure.
 When nature's blush by custom is wip'd off,
 And conscience, deaden'd by repeated strokes,
 Has into manners naturaliz'd our crimes,
 The curse of curses is, our curse to love :
 To triumph in the blackness of our guilt
 (As Indians glory in the deepest jet ;)
 And throw aside our senses with our peace.

35

40

45

But, grant no guilt, no shame, no least alloy ;
 Grant joy and glory, quite unfully'd shone ;
 Yet, still, it ill deserves Lorenzo's heart.
 No joy, no glory, glitters in thy sight,
 But thro' the thin partition of an hour,

50

I

I see its fables wove by destiny ;
 And *that* in sorrow bury'd ; *this* in shame ;
 While howling furies ring the doleful knell ;
 And conscience, now so soft thou scarce canst hear
 Her whisper, echoes her eternal peal.

55

Where, the prime actors of the last year's scene ;
 Their port so proud, their buskin, and their plume ?
 How many sleep, who kept the world awake
 With lustre, and with noise ! Has death proclaim'd
 A truce, and hung his fated lance on high ?
 'Tis brandish'd still, nor shall the present year
 Be more tenacious of her human leaf,
 Or spread of feeble life a thinner fall.

60

But needless monuments to wake the thought ;
 Life's gayest scenes speak man's mortality ;
 Tho' in a style more florid, full as plain,
 As mausoleums, pyramids, and tombs.
 What are our noblest ornaments, but deaths
 Turn'd flatterers of life, in paint or marble,
 The well-stain'd canvas, or the featur'd stone ?
 Our fathers grace, or rather haunt, the scene.
 Joy peoples her pavilion from the dead.

70

" Profest diversions ! cannot these escape ? " —
 Far from it : These present us with a shroud ;
 And talk of death, like garlands o'er a grave.
 As some bold plunderers, for bury'd wealth,
 We ransack tombs for pastime ; from the dust
 Call up the sleeping hero ; bid him tread
 The scene for our amusement : How like gods
 We sit ; and, wrapt in immortality,
 Shed gen'rous tears on wretches born to die ;
 Their fate deploring, to forget our own !

75

What, all the pomps and triumphs of our lives,
 But legacies in blossom ? Our lean soil,
 Luxuriant grown, and rank in vanities,
 From friends interr'd beneath ; a rich manure !
 Like other worms, we banquet on the dead ;
 Like other worms, shall we crawl on, nor know
 Our present frailties, or approaching fate ?

80

85

K 2

Lorenzo !

Lorenzo ! such the glories of the world ! 98
 What is the world itself ? Thy world ?—A grave.
 Where is the dust that has not been alive ?
 The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors ;
 From human mould we reap our daily bread.
 The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes, 95
 And is the cieling of her sleeping sons.
 O'er devastation we blind revels keep ;
 Whole bury'd towns support the dancer's heel.
 The moist of human frame the sun exhales ;
 Winds scatter, thro' the mighty void, the dry ; 100
 Earth repossesses part of what she gave,
 And the freed spirit mounts on wings of fire ;
 Each element partakes our scatter'd spoils ;
 As nature, wide, our ruins spread : man's death
 Inhabits all things, but the thought of man. 105
 Nor man alone ; his breathing bust expires,
 His tomb is mortal ; empires die : Where, now,
 The Roman ? Greek ? They stalk, an empty name !
 Yet few regard them in this useful light ;
 Tho' half our learning is their epitaph. 110
 When down thy vale, unlock'd by midnight thought,
 That loves to wander in thy sunlet's realms,
 O death ! I stretch my view ; what visions rise !
 What triumphs ! Toils imperial ! Arts divine !
 In wither'd laurels glide before my sight ! 115
 What lengths of far-fam'd ages, billow'd high
 With human agitation, roll along
 In unsubstantial images of air !
 The melancholy ghosts of dead renown,
 Whisp'ring faint echoes of the world's applause : 120
 With penitential aspect, as they pass,
 All point at earth, and hiss at human pride,
 The wisdom of the wise, and prancings of the great.
 But, O Lorenzo, far the rest above,
 Of ghastly nature, and enormous size, 125
 One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,
 And shakes my frame. Of one departed world
 I see the mighty shadow : oozy wreath

And dismal sea-weed crown her ! * o'er her urn
 Reclin'd, she weeps her desolated realms, 130
 And bloated sons ; and, weeping, prophecies
 Another's dissolution, soon, in flames.
 But, like Cassandra, prophecies in vain ;
 In vain, to many : not, I trust, to thee.

For, know'st thou not, or art thou loth to know, 135
 The great decree the counsel of the skies ?
 Deluge and conflagration, dreadful pow'rs !
 Prime ministers of vengeance ! Chain'd in caves
 Distinct, apart the giant furies roar ;
 Apart ; or, such their horrid rage for ruin, 140
 In mutual conflict would they rise, and wage
 Eternal war, till one was quite devour'd.
 But not for this, ordain'd their boundless rage :
 When Heav'n's inferior instruments of wrath,
 War, famine, pestilence, are found too weak 145
 To scourge a world for her enormous crimes,
 These are let loose, alternate : down they rush,
 Swift and tempestuous, from th' eternal throne,
 With irresistible commission arm'd,
 The world, in vain corrected, to destroy, 150
 And ease creation of the shocking scene.

Seest thou, Lorenzo, what depends on man ?
 The fate of nature ; as for man, her birth.
 Earth's actors change earth's transitory scenes,
 And make creation groan with human guilt. 155
 How must it groan, in a new deluge whelm'd,
 But not of waters ! At the destin'd hour,
 By the loud trumpet summon'd to the charge,
 See, all the formidable sons of fire,
 Eruptions, earthquakes, comets, lightnings, play 160
 Their various engines : all at once disgorge
 Their blazing magazines ; and take, by storm,
 This poor terrestrial citadel of man.

Amazing period ! when each mountain-height
 Out-burns Vesuvius ; rocks eternal pour 165
 Their melted mass, as rivers once they pour'd ;

K 3

Stars

* The deluge, referr'd to Genesis vii. 22.

Stars rush ; and final ruin fiercely drives
 Her plough-share o'er creation !—While aloft,
 More than astonishment ! if more can be !
 Far other firmament than e'er was seen, 170
 Than e'er was thought by man ! Far other stars !
 Stars animate, that govern those of fire ;
 Far other sun !—A sun, O how unlike
 The babe at Bethle'm ! How unlike the man
 That groan'd on Calvary ! Yet he it is ; 175
 That man of sorrows ! O how chang'd ! What pomp !
 In grandeur terrible, all Heav'n descends !
 And gods, ambitious, triumph in his train.
 A swift archangel, with his golden wing,
 As blots and clouds, that darken and disgrace 180
 The scene divine, sweeps stars and suns aside.
 And now, all dross remov'd, Heav'n's own pure day,
 Full on the confines of our æther, flames,
 While (dreadful contrast !) far, how far beneath !
 Hell bursting, belches forth her blazing seas, 185
 And storms sulphureous ; her voracious jaws
 Expanding wide, and roaring for her prey.
 Lorenzo, welcome to this scene ; the last
 In nature's course ; the first in wisdom's thought.
 This strikes, if aught can strike thee ; this awakes 190
 The most supine ; this snatches man from death.
 Rouse, rouse, Lorenzo, then, and follow me,
 Where truth, the most momentous man can hear,
 Loud calls my soul, and ardour wings her flight.
 I find my inspiration in my theme ; 195
 The grandeur of my subject is my muse.
 At midnight (when mankind is wrapt in peace,
 And worldly fancy feeds on golden dreams ;)
 To give more dread to man's most dreadful hour,
 At midnight, 'tis presum'd, this pomp will burst 200
 From tenfold darkness ; sudden as the spark
 From smitten steel ; from nitrous grain, the blaze.
 Man, starting from his couch, shall sleep no more !
 The day is broke, which never more shall close ;
 Above, around, beneath, amazement all ! 205
 Terror and glory join'd in their extremes !
 Our

Our GOD in grandeur, and our world on fire !
 All nature struggling in the pangs of death !
 Dost thou not hear her ? Dost thou not deplore
 Her strong convulsions, and her final groan ? 210
 Where are we now ? Ah me ! The ground is gone
 On which we stood, Lorenzo ! While thou may'st,
 Provide more firm support, or sink for ever !
 Where ? How ? From whence ? Vain hope ! Is it too late !
 Where, where, for shelter, shall the guilty fly, 215
 When consternation turns the good man pale ?

Great day ! for which all other days were made ;
 For which earth rose from chaos, man from earth ;
 And an eternity, the date of gods,
 Descended on poor earth-created man ! 220
 Great day of dread, decision, and despair !
 At thought of thee each sublunary with
 Lets go its eager grasp, and drops the world ;
 And catches at each reed of hope in Heav'n.
 At thought of thee !—And art thou absent then ? 225
 Lorenzo, no ; 'tis here ; it is begun ;—
 Already is begun the grand assize,
 In thee, in all : deputed conscience scales
 The dread tribunal, and forestals our doom ;
 Forestals ; and, by forestalling, proves it sure. 230
 Why on himself should man void judgment pass ?
 Is idle nature laughing at her sons ?
 Who conscience sent, her sentence will support,
 And GOD above assert that God in man.

Thrice happy they ! that enter now the court 235
 Heav'n opens in their bosom : but, how rare !
 Ah me ! That magnanimity, how rare !
 What hero, like the man who stands himself ;
 Who dares to meet his naked heart alone ;
 Who hears, intrepid, the full charge it brings, 240
 Resolv'd to silence future murmurs there !
 The coward flies ; and, flying, is undone.
 (Art thou a coward ? No :) the coward flies ;
 Thinks, but thinks slightly ; asks, but fears to know ;
 Asks, “ What is truth ? ” with Pilate ; † and retires ; 245

K 4

Dissolves

Dissolves the court, and mingles with the throng ;
 Asylum sad ! from reason, hope, and Heav'n !

Shall all, but man, look out with ardent eye,
 For that great day, which was ordain'd for man ?

O day of consummation ! Mark supreme 250

(If men are wise) of human thought ! nor least,

Or in the sight of angels, or their KING !

Angels, whose radiant circles, height o'er height,

Order o'er order, rising, blaze o'er blaze,

As in a theatre, surround this scene, 255

Intent on man, and anxious for his fate.

Angels look out for thee ; for thee their LORD,

To vindicate his glory ; and for thee,

Creation universal calls aloud,

To dis-involve the moral world, and give 260

To nature's renovation brighter charms.

Shall man alone, whose fate, whose final fate,

Hangs on that hour, exclude it from his thought ?

I think of nothing else ; I see ! I feel it !

All nature, like an earthquake, trembling round ! 265

All deities, like summer's swarms, on wing !

All basking in the full meridian blaze !

I see the Judge enthron'd ! The flaming guard !

The volume open'd ! Open'd ev'ry heart !

A sun-beam pointing out each secret thought ! 270

No patron ! Intercessor none ! Now past

The sweet, the clement, mediatorial hour !

For guilt, no plea ! To pain, no pause ! no bound !

Inexorable, all ! and all, extreme !

Nor man alone ; the foe of GOD and man, 275

From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,

And rears his brazen front, with thunder scarr'd ;

Receives his sentence, and begins his hell.

All vengeance past, now, seems abundant grace ;

Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll 280

His baleful eyes ! He curses whom he dreads ;

And deems it the first moment of his fall.

'Tis present to my thought !—And yet where is it ?

Angels can't tell ; angels cannot guess

The period ; from created beings lock'd 285

NIGHT THE NINTH.

201

In darkness. But the process, and the place,
Are less obscure ; for these may man enquire.
Say, thou great close of human hopes and fears !
Great key of hearts ! Great finisher of fates !
Great end ! and great beginning ! Say, where art thou ? 290
Art thou in time, or in eternity ?

Nor in eternity, nor time, I find thee.
These, as two monarchs, on their borders meet,
(Monarchs of all elaps'd, or unarriv'd !)
As in debate, how best their pow'rs ally'd 295
May swell the grandeur, or discharge the wrath
Of HIM whom both their monarchies obey.

Time, this vast fabric for him built (and doom'd
With him to fall) now bursting o'er his head ;
His lamp, the sun, extinguish'd ; from beneath 300
The frown of hideous darkness, calls his sons
From their long slumber ; from earth's heaving womb,
To second birth ; contemporary throng !
Rous'd at one call, upstarting from one bed,
Prest in one crowd, appall'd with one amaze, 305
He turns them o'er, eternity ! to thee.

Then (as a king depos'd disdains to live)
He falls on his own scythe ; nor falls alone ;
His greatest foe falls with him ; Time and he
Who murder'd all Time's offspring, death, expire. 310

Time was ! Eternity now reigns alone !
Awful eternity ! offended queen !
And her resentment to mankind, how just !
With kind intent, soliciting access,
How often has she knock'd at human hearts ! 315
Rich to repay their hospitality,
How often call'd ! and with the voice of GOD !
Yet bore repulse, excluded as a cheat !

A dream ! while foulest foes found welcome there !
A dream, a cheat, now, all things, but her smile. 320

For, lo ! her twice ten thousand gates thrown wide,
As thrice from Indus to the frozen pole,
With banners, streaming as the comet's blaze,
And clarions, louder than the deep in storms,
Sonorous as immortal breath can blow, 325

Pour forth their myriads, potentates, and pow'rs,
 Of light, of darkness ; in a middle field,
 Wide, as creation ! populous, as wide !
 A neutral region ! there to mark th'event
 Of that great drama, whose preceding scenes 330
 Detain'd them close spectators, thro' a length
 Of ages, rip'ning to this grand result :
 Ages, as yet unnumber'd, but by GOD ;
 Who now, pronouncing sentence, vindicates
 The rights of virtue, and his own renown. 335

Eternity, the various sentence past,
 Assigns the sever'd throng distinct abodes,
 Sulphureous, or ambrosial : What ensues ?
 The deed predominant ! the deed of deeds !
 Which makes a hell of hell, a Heav'n of Heav'n. 340
 The goddess, with determin'd aspect, turns
 Her adamant key's enormous size
 Thro' destiny's inextricable wards,
 Deep-driving ev'ry bolt, on both their fates.
 Then, from the crystal battlements of Heav'n, 345
 Down, down she hurls it thro' the dark profound,
 Ten thousand thousand fathom ; there to rust,
 And ne'er unlock her resolution more.
 The deep resounds, and hell, thro' all her glooms,
 Returns, in groans, the melancholy roar. 350

O how unlike the chorus of the skies !
 O how unlike those shouts of joy, that shake
 The whole ethereal ! how the concave rings !
 Nor strange ! when deities their voice exalt ;
 And louder far, than when creation rose, 355
 To see creation's godlike aim, and end,
 So well accomplish'd ! so divinely clos'd !
 To see the mighty dramatist's last act
 (As meet) in glory rising o'er the rest.
 No fancy'd god, a God indeed, descends, 360
 To solve all knots ; to strike the moral home ;
 To throw full day on darkest scenes of time ;
 To clear, commend, exalt, and crown the whole.
 Hence, in one peal of loud, eternal praise,

The charm'd spectators thunder their applause ; 365
And the vast void beyond, applause resounds.

What then am I ?——

Amidst applauding worlds,

And worlds celestial, is there found on earth,
A peevish, dissonant, rebellious string,
Which jars in the grand chorus, and complains ? 370

Censure on thee, Lorenzo ! I suspend,
And turn it on myself ; how greatly due !
All, all is right, by God ordain'd or done ;
And who, but God, resum'd the friends he gave ?
And have I been complaining, then, so long ? 375

Complaining of his favours, pain, and death ?
Who, without pain's advice, would e'er be good ?
Who, without death, but would be good in vain ?
Pain is to save from pain ; all punishment,
To make for peace ; and death, to save from death ; 380

And second death to guard immortal life ;
To rouse the careless, the presumptuous awe,
And turn the tide of souls another way ;
By the same tenderness divine ordain'd,
That planted Eden, and high-bloom'd for man, 385
A fairer Eden, endless in the skies.

Heav'n gives us friends to bless the present scene ;
Resumes them, to prepare us for the next.

All evils natural are moral goods ;
All discipline, indulgence, on the whole. 390

None are unhappy ; all have cause to smile,
But such as to themselves that cause deny.
Our faults are at the bottom of our pains ;
Error, in act, or judgment, is the source
Of endless sighs : We sin, or we mistake, 395

And nature tax, when false opinion stings.
Let impious grief be banish'd, joy indulg'd,
But chiefly then, when grief puts in her claim.
Joy from the joyous, frequently betrays,
Oft lives in vanity, and dies in woe. 400

Joy, amidst ills, corroborates, exalts ;
'Tis joy, and conquest ; joy, and virtue too.

A noble fortitude in ills delights

Heav'n, earth, ourselves; 'tis duty, glory, peace.

Affection is the good man's shining scene;

405

Prosperity conceals his brightest rays;

As night to stars, woe lustre gives to man.

Heroes in battle, pilots in the storm,

And virtue in calamities, admire.

The crown of manhood is a winter-joy;

410

An ever-green, that stands the northern blast,

And blossoms in the rigour of our fate.

'Tis a prime part of happiness, to know

How much unhappiness must prove our lot;

A part which few possess! I'll pay life's tax,

415

Without one rebel murmur, from this hour,

Nor think it misery to be a man;

Who thinks it is shall never be a god.

Some ills we wish for, when we wish to live.

What spoke proud passion!—"† Wish my being lost!" 420

Presumptuous! blasphemous! absurd! and false!

The triumph of my soul is,—That I am;

And therefore that I may be—What? Lorenzo!

Look inward, and look deep; and deeper still:

Unfathomably deep our treasure runs.

425

In golden veins thro' all eternity!

Ages, and ages, and succeeding still

New ages, where this phantom of an hour,

Which courts, each night, dull slumber, for repair,

Shall wake, and wonder, and exult, and praise,

430

And fly thro' infinite, and all unlock;

And (if deserv'd) by Heav'n's redundant love,

Made half-adorable itself, adore;

And find, in adoration, endless joy!

Where thou, not master of a moment here,

435

Frail as the flow'r, and fleeting as the gale,

May'st boast a whole eternity, enrich'd

With all a kind Omnipotence can pour.

Since Adam fell, no mortal, uninspir'd,

Has ever yet conceiv'd, or ever shall,

440

How kind is God, how great (if good) is man.

No

† Referring to the First Night.

No man too largely from Heav'n's love can hope,
If what is hop'd he labours to secure.

Ills?—There are none : all gracious ! none from thee :
From man full many ! num'rous is the race 445
Of blackest ill, and those immortal too.

Begot by madness on fair liberty ;
Heav'n's daughter, hell debauch'd ! her hand alone
Unlocks destruction to the sons of men,
Fast barr'd by thine ; high-wall'd with adamant, 450

Guarded with terrors reaching to this world,
And cover'd with the thunders of thy law ;
Whose threats are mercies, whose injunctions, guides,
Assisting, not restraining, reason's choice ;
Whose sanctions, unavoidable results 455

From nature's course, indulgently reveal'd ;
If unreveal'd, more dang'rous, nor less sure.

Thus, an indulgent father warns his sons,
“ Do this ; fly that ”—nor always tells the cause ;
Pleas'd to reward, as duty to his will, 460
A conduct needful to their own repose.

Great God of wonders ! (if, thy love survey'd,
Aught else the name of wonderful retains)

What rocks are these, on which to build our trust !
Thy ways admit no blemish ; none I find ; 465
Or this alone — “ That none is to be found.”

Not one, to soften censure's hardy crime ;
Not one, to palliate peevish grief's complaint,
Who, like a dæmon murmur'ing, from the dust,
Dares into judgment call her judge.—Supreme ! 470

For all I blest thee ; most, for the severe ;
† Her death—my own at hand—the fiery gulph,
That flaming bound of wrath omnipotent !

It thunders ;—but it thunders to preserve ;
It strengthens what it strikes ; its wholesome dread 475
Averts the dreaded pain ; its hideous groans

Join Heav'n's sweet hallelujahs in thy praise,
Great source of good alone ! How kind in all !
In vengeance kind ! pain, death, Gehenna, save.

Thus,

† Lucia.

Thus, in thy word material, mighty mind !
 Not that alone which solaces, and shines,
 The rough and gloomy, challenges our praise.
 The winter is as needful as the spring ;
 The thunder as the sun : a stagnate mass
 Of vapours breeds a pestilential air :
 Nor more propitious the Favonian breeze
 To nature's health, than purifying storms ;
 The dread volcano ministers to good.
 Its smother'd flames might undermine the world.
 Loud Ætnas fulminate in love to man ;
 Comets good omens are, when duly scan'd ;
 And, in their use, eclipses learn to shine.

Man is responsible for ills receiv'd !
 Those we call wretched are a chosen band,
 Compell'd to refuge in the right, for peace.
 Amid my list of blessings infinite,
 Stand this the foremost, " That my heart has bled."
 'Tis Heav'n's last effort of good-will to man ;
 When pain can't bless, Heav'n quits us in despair.
 Who fails to grieve, when just occasion calls,
 Or grieves too much, deserves not to be blest ;
 Inhuman, or effeminate, his heart ;
 Reason absolves the grief, which reason ends.
 May Heav'n ne'er trust my friend with happiness,
 Till it has taught him how to bear it well,
 By previous pain ; and made it safe to smile !
 Such smiles are mine, and such may they remain ;
 Nor hazard their extinction, from excess.
 My change of heart a change of style demands ;
 The Consolation cancels the Complaint,
 And makes a convert of my guilty song.

As when o'er-labour'd, and inclin'd to breathe,
 A panting traveller, some rising ground,
 Some small ascent, has gain'd, he turns him round,
 And measures with his eye the various vale,
 The fields, woods, meads, and rivers, he has past ;
 And, satiate of his journey, thinks of home,
 Endear'd by distance, nor affects more toil :
 Thus I, tho' small, indeed, is that ascent

430

485

490

495

500

505

510

515

The

NIGHT THE NINTH.

207

The muse has gain'd, review the paths she trod ; 520

Various, extensive, beaten but by few :

And, conscious of her prudence in repose,

Pause ; and with pleasure meditate an end,

Tho' still remote ; so fruitful is my theme,

Thro' many a field of moral and divine, 525

The muse has stray'd ; and much of sorrow seen

In human ways ; and much of false and vain ;

Which none, who travel this bad road, can miss.

O'er friends deceas'd full heartily she wept ;

Of love divine the wonders she display'd ; 530

Prov'd man immortal ; shew'd the source of joy ;

The grand tribunal rais'd ; assign'd the bounds

Of human grief : in few, to close the whole,

The moral muse has shadow'd out a sketch,

Tho' not in form, nor with a Raphael-stroke, 535

Of most our weakness needs believe or do,

In this our land of travel, and of hope,

For peace on earth, or prospect of the skies.

What then remains ?—Much ! much ! a mighty debt
To be discharg'd : these thoughts, O night ! are thine ; 540

From thee they came, like lover's secret sighs

While others slept. So, Cynthia (poets feign)

In shadows veil'd, soft sliding from her sphere,

Her shepherd cheer'd ; of her enamour'd less,

Than I of thee.—And art thou still unsung, 545

Beneath whose brow, and by whose aid, I sing ?

Immortal silence !—Where shall I begin ?

Where end ? Or how steal music from the spheres,

To sooth their goddesses ?

O majestic Night !

Nature's great ancestor ! Day's elder-born ! 550

And fated to survive the transient sun !

By mortals, and immortals, seen with awe !

A starry crown thy raven brow adorns,

An azure zone, thy waist ; clouds, in Heav'n's loom

Wrought thro' varieties of shape and shade, 555

In ample folds of drapery divine,

Thy flowing mantle form ; and Heav'n throughout,

Voluminously pour thy pompous train,

Thy

Thy gloomy grandeurs (nature's most august
Inspiring aspect!) claim a grateful verse; 566
And, like a fable curtain starr'd with gold,
Drawn o'er my labours past, shall close the scene.

And what, O man! so worthy to be sung?
What more prepares us for the songs of Heav'n?
Creation of archangels is the theme! 568

What, to be sung, so needful? What so well
Celestial joys prepare us to sustain?

The soul of man, His face design'd to see,
Who gave these wonders to be seen by man,
Has here a previous scene of objects great, 570

On which to dwell; to stretch to that expanse
Of thought, to rise to that exalted height
Of admiration, to contract that awe,
And give her whole capacities that strength,
Which best may qualify for final joy. 575

The more our spirits are enlarg'd on earth,
The deeper draught shall they receive of Heav'n.

Heav'n's KING! whose face unveil'd consummates bliss;
Redundant bliss! which fills that mighty void,
The whole creation leaves in human hearts! 580

THOU, who didst touch the lips of Jesse's son †,
Rapt in sweet contemplation of these fires,
And set his harp in concert with the spheres!
While of thy works material the supreme
I dare attempt, assist my daring song. 585

Loose me from earth's inclosure, from the sun's
Contracted circle set my heart at large;

Eliminate my spirit, give it range
Thro' provinces of thought yet unexplor'd;
Teach me, by this stupendous scaffolding, 590
Creation's golden steps, to climb to THEE.

Teach me with art great nature to controul,
And spread a lustre o'er the shades of night,
Feel I thy kind assent? And shall the sun
Be seen at midnight, rising in my song? 595

Lorenzo! come, and warm thee: thou whose heart,
Whose

† David, 1 Samuel xvi. 18, 24.

Whose little heart, is moor'd within a nook
 Of this obscure terrestrial, anchor weigh.
 Another ocean calls, a nobler port ;
 I am thy pilot, I thy prosperous gale. 600
 Gainful thy voyage thro' yon azure main ;
 Main, without tempest, pirate, rock, or shore ;
 And whence thou may'st import eternal wealth ;
 And leave to beggar'd minds the pearl and gold.
 Thy travels dost thou boast o'er foreign realms ? 605
 Thou stranger to the world ! thy tour begin ;
 Thy tour thro' nature's universal orb.
 Nature delineates her whole chart at large,
 On soaring souls, that sail among the spheres ;
 And man how purblind, if unknown the whole ! 610
 Who circles spacious earth, then travels here,
 Shall own, he never was from home before !
 Come, my † Prometheus, from thy pointed rock
 Of false ambition, if unchain'd, we'll mount ;
 We'll innocently steal celestial fire, 615
 And kindle our devotion at the stars ;
 A theft that shall not chain, but set thee free.
 Above our atmosphere's intestine wars,
 Rain's fountain-head, the magazine of hail ;
 Above the northern nests of feather'd snows, 620
 The brew of thunders, and the flaming forge
 That forms the crooked lightning ; 'bove the caves
 Where infant tempests wait their growing wings,
 And tune their tender voices to that roar,
 Which soon, perhaps, shall shake a guilty world ; 625
 Above misconstru'd omens of the sky,
 Far travell'd comet's calculated blaze,
 Elance thy thought, and think on more than man.
 Thy soul, till now, contracted, wither'd, shrunk,
 Blighted by blasts of earth's unwholesome air, 630
 Will blossom here ; spread all her faculties
 To these bright ardours ; ev'ry pow'r unfold,
 And rise into sublimities of thought.
 Stars teach, as well as shine. At nature's birth,

Thus,

† Night the Eighth.

Thus, their commission ran—"Be kind to man."
 Where art thou, poor benighted traveller!
 The stars will light thee, tho' the moon should fail.
 Where art thou, more benighted! more astray!
 In ways immoral? The stars call thee back;
 And, if obey'd their counsel, set thee right.

635

This prospect vast, what is it?—Weigh'd aright,
 'Tis nature's system of divinity,
 And ev'ry student of the night inspires.
 'Tis elder Scripture, writ by GOD's own hand;
 Scripture authentic! uncorrupt by man.
 Lorenzo, with my radius (the rich gift
 Of thought nocturnal!) I'll point out to thee
 Its various lessons; some that may surprise
 An un-adept in mysteries of night;
 Little, perhaps, expected in her school,
 Nor thought to grow on planet, or on star.
 Bulls, lions, scorpions, monsters here we feign;
 Ourselves more monstrous, not to see what here
 Exists indeed;—a lecture to mankind.

640

645

650

What read we here?—Th'existence of a God?
 —Yes; and of other beings, man above;
 Natives of æther! Sons of higher climes!
 And, what may move Lorenzo's wonder more,
 Eternity is written in the skies.

655

And whose eternity?—Lorenzo! thine;
 Mankind's eternity. Nor faith alone,
 Virtue grows here; here springs the sov'reign cure
 Of almost ev'ry vice; but chiefly thine!
 Wrath, pride, ambition, and impure desire.

660

Lorenzo, thou canst wake at midnight too,
 Tho' not on morals bent: ambition, pleasure!
 Those tyrants I for thee so † lately fought,
 Afford their harraß'd slaves but slender rest.
 Thou, to whom midnight is immortal noon,
 And the sun's noon-tide blaze, prime dawn of day;
 Not by thy climate, but capricious crime,
 Commencing one of our antipodes!

665

670

In

† Night the Eighth.

NIGHT THE NINTH.

318

In thy nocturnal rove, one moment halt,
'Twixt stage and stage, of riot, and cabal ;
And lift thine eye (if bold an eye to lift,
If bold to meet the face of injur'd Heav'n)
To yonder stars : for other ends they shine,
Than to light revellers from shame to shame,
And, thus, be made accomplices in guilt.

673

Why from yon arch, that infinite of space,
With infinite of lucid orbs replete,
Which set the living firmament on fire,
At the first glance, in such an overwhelm
Of wonderful, on man's astonish'd sight,
Rushes Omnipotence ?—To curb our pride ;
Our reason rouse, and lead it to that pow'r,
Whose love lets down these silver chains of light ;
To draw up man's ambition to himself,
And bind our chaste affections to his throne.

680

Thus the three virtues, least alive on earth,
And welcom'd on Heav'n's coast with most applause,
An humble, pure, and heav'nly-minded heart,
Are here inspir'd : And canst thou gaze too long ?

685

Nor stands thy wrath depriv'd of its reproof,
Or un-upbraided by this radiant choir.

690

The planets of each system represent
Kind neighbours ; mutual amity prevails ;
Sweet interchange of rays, receiv'd, return'd ;
Enlight'ning, and enlighten'd ! All, at once,
Attracting, and attracted ! Patriot-like,
None sins against the welfare of the whole ;
But their reciprocal, unselfish aid,
Affords an emblem of millennial love.

695

Nothing in nature, much less conscious being,
Was e'er created solely for itself :

700

Thus man his sov'reign duty learns in this
Material picture of benevolence.

705

And know, of all our supercilious race,
Thou most inflammable ; thou wasp of men !
Man's angry heart, inspected, would be found
As rightly set, as are the starry spheres ;
'Tis nature's structure, broke by stubborn will,

710

Breeds

Breeds all that uncelestial discord there.
 Wilt thou not feel the bias nature gave ?
 Canst thou descend from converse with the skies, 713
 And seize thy brother's throat ?—For what ?—a clod ?
 An inch of earth ? The planets cry, “forbear.”
 They chace our double darkness ; nature's gloom,
 And (kinder still !) our intellectual night.
 And see, day's amiable sister sends 720
 Her invitation in the softest rays
 Of mitigated lustre ; courts thy sight,
 Which suffers from her tyrant-brother's blaze.
 Night grants thee the full freedom of the skies,
 Nor rudely reprimands thy lifted eye ; 725
 With gain, and joy, she bribes thee to be wise.
 Night opens the noblest scenes, and sheds an awe,
 Which gives those venerable scenes full weight,
 And deep reception, in th'intender'd heart ;
 While Light peeps thro' the darkness, like a spy : 730
 And darkness shews its grandeur by the light.
 Nor is the profit greater than the joy,
 If human hearts at glorious objects glow,
 And admiration can inspire delight.
 What speak I more, than I, this moment feel ! 735
 With pleasing stupor first the soul it struck
 (Stupor ordain'd to make her truly wise !)
 Then into transport starting from her trance,
 With love, and admiration, how she glows !
 This gorgeous apparatus ! This display ! 740
 This ostentation of creative pow'r !
 This theatre !—what eye can take it in ?
 By what divine enchantment was it rais'd,
 For minds of the first magnitude to launch
 In endless speculation, and adore ? 745
 One sun by day, by night ten thousand shine ;
 And light us deep into the DEITY ;
 How boundless in magnificence and might !
 O what a confluence of ethereal fires,
 From urns un-number'd, down the steep of Heav'n, 750
 Streams to a point, and centers in my sight !
 Nor taries there ; I feel it at my heart.

My

My heart, at once, it humbles and exalts ;
 Lays it in dust, and calls it to the skies.
 Who sees it unexalted ? or unaw'd ? 755
 Who sees it, and can stop at what is seen ?
 Material offspring of Omnipotence !
 Inanimate, all-animating birth !
 Work worthy Him who made ! worthy praise !
 All praise ! praise more than human ! nor deny'd 760
 Thy praise divine ! But tho' man, drown'd in sleep,
 With-holds his homage, not alone I wake ;
 Bright legions swarm unseen, and sing, unheard
 By mortal ear, the glorious Architect,
 In this his universal temple hung 765
 With lustres, with innumerable lights,
 That shed religion on the soul ; at once,
 The temple, and the preacher ! O how loud
 It calls devotion ! genuine growth of night !
 Devotion ! daughter of astronomy ! 770
 An undevout astronomer is mad.
 True ; all things speak a God ; but in the final,
 Men trace out him ; in great, he seizes man ;
 Seizes and elevates, and wraps, and fills
 With new enquiries, 'mid associates new. 775
 Tell me, ye stars ! ye planets ! tell me, all
 Ye starr'd, and planeted, inhabitants ! What is it ?
 What are these sons of wonder ! Say, proud arch !
 (Within whose azure palaces they dwell)
 Built with divine ambition ! in disdain 780
 Of limit built ! built in the taste of Heav'n !
 Vast concave ! ample dome ! Wast thou design'd
 A meet apartment for the DEITY ?—
 Not so ; That thought alone thy state impairs,
 Thy lofty sinks, and shallows thy profound, 785
 And streightens thy diffusive ! dwarfs the whole,
 And makes an universe an orrery.
 But when I drop mine eye, and look on man,
 Thy right regain'd, thy grandeur is restor'd,
 O nature ! wide flies off th'expanding round, 790
 As when whole magazines, at once, are fir'd,
 The finitten air is hollow'd by the blow ;

The

The vast displosion dissipates the clouds ;
 Shock'd æther's billows dash the distant skies ;
 Thus (but far more) th'expanding round flies off,
 And leaves a mighty void, a spacious womb,
 Might teem with new creation ; re-inflam'd
 Thy luminaries triumph, and assume
 Divinity themselves. Nor was it strange,
 Matter high-wrought to such surprising pomp,
 Such godlike glory, stole the style of gods,
 From ages dark, obtuse, and steep'd in sense ;
 For sure, to sense, they truly are divine,
 And half absolv'd idolatry from guilt ;
 Nay, turn'd it into virtue. Such it was
 In those, who put forth all they had of man
 Unlost, to lift their thought, nor mounted higher ;
 But, weak of wing, on planets perch'd ; and thought
 What was their highest, must be their ador'd.

But they how weak, who could no higher mount !
 And are there then, Lorenzo ! those, to whom
 Unseen, and unexistent are the same ?
 And if incomprehensible is join'd,
 Who dare pronounce it madness, to believe ?
 Why has the mighty Builder thrown aside
 All measure in his work ; stretch'd out his line
 So far, and spread amazement o'er the whole !
 Then (as he took delight in wide extremes)
 Deep in the bosom of his universe,
 Dropt down that reas'ning mite, that insect, man,
 To crawl, and gaze (and wonder at the scene)—
 That man might ne'er presume to plead amazement
 For disbelief of wonders in himself.

Shall GOD be less miraculous, than what
 His hand has form'd ? Shall mysteries descend
 From un-mysterious ? Things more elevate,
 Be more familiar ? Uncreated lie
 More obvious than created, to the grasp
 Of human thought ? The more of wonderful
 Is heard in Him, the more we should assent.
 Could we conceive Him, God he could not be ;
 Or He not God, or we could not be men.

795

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A

NIGHT THE NINTH.

215

A God alone can comprehend a God ;
Man's distance how immense ! On such a theme,
Know this, Lorenzo ! (seem it ne'er so strange ;) 335
Nothing can satisfy, but what confounds ;
Nothing, but what astonishes, is true.

The scene thou seest, attests the truth I sing,
And ev'ry star sheds light upon thy creed.
These stars, this furniture, this coast of Heav'n, 340
If but reported, thou hadst ne'er believ'd ;
But thine eye tells thee, the romance is true.
The grand of nature is th'Almighty's oath,
In reason's court, to silence unbelief.

How my mind, op'ning at this scene imbibes 345
The moral emanations of the skies,
While nought, perhaps, Lorenzo less admires !
Has the Great Sov'reign sent ten thousand worlds
To tell us, He resides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable recess ? 350

And dare earth's bold inhabitants deny
The sumptuous, the magnific embassy
A moment's audience ? Turn we, nor will hear
From whom they come, or what they would impart 355
For man's emolument ; sole cause that stoops
Their grandeur to man's eye ? Lorenzo ! rouse ;
Let thought, awaken'd, take the light'ning's wing,
And glance from east to west, from pole to pole.
Who sees, but is confounded, or convinc'd ?

Renounces reason, or a God adores ? 360

Mankind was sent into the world to see :
Sight gives the science needful to their peace ;
That obvious science asks small learning's aid.

Wouldst thou on metaphysic pinions soar ?
Or wound thy patience amid logic thorns ? 365
Or travel history's enormous round ?

Nature no such hard task enjoins : She gave
A make to man directive of his thought ;
A make set upright, pointing to the stars,
As who should say, " Read thy chief lesson there." 370
Too late to read this manuscript of Heav'n,

When

When, like a parchment-scroll, shrunk up by flames,
It folds Lorenzo's lesson from his sight.

Lesson how various! Not the God alone,
I see His ministers; I see, diffus'd 875
In radiant orders, essences sublime,
Of various offices, of various plume,
In heav'nly liveries, distinctly, clad,
Azure, green, purple, pearl, or downy gold,
Or all commix'd; they stand, with wings outspread, 880
Lift'ning to catch the master's least command,
And fly thro' nature, ere the moment ends;
Numbers innumerable!—Well conceiv'd
By pagan, and by Christian! O'er each sphere
Presides an angel, to direct its course, 885
And feed, or fan, its flames; or to discharge
Other high trusts unknown. For who can see
Such pomp of matter, and imagine, mind,
For which alone inanimate was made,
More sparingly dispens'd? That nobler Son, 890
Far liker the great Sire!—'Tis thus the skies
Informs us of superiors numberless,
As much, in excellence, above mankind,
As above earth, in magnitude, the spheres.
These, as a cloud of witnesses, hang o'er us; 895
In a throng'd theatre are all our deeds;
Perhaps, a thousand demi-gods descend
On ev'ry beam we see, to walk with men.
Awful reflection! Strong restraint from ill!
Yet, here, our virtue finds still stronger aid 900
From these ethereal glories sense surveys.
Something, like magic, strikes from this blue vault;
With just attention is it view'd? We feel
A sudden succour, unimplor'd, unthought;
Nature herself does half the work of man. 905
Seas, rivers, mountains, forests, deserts, rocks,
The promontory's height, the depth profound
Of subterranean, excavated grotts,
Black-brow'd, and vaulted high, and yawning wide
From nature's structure, or the scope of time;
If ample of dimension, vast of size, 910

Ev'n

Ev'n these an aggrandizing impulse give ;
 Of solemn thought enthusiastic heights
 Ev'n these infuse.—But what of vast in these ?
 Nothing ; or we must own the skies forgot. 915
 Much less in art.—Vain art ! Thou pigmy-pow'r !
 How dost thou swell, and strut, with human pride,
 To shew thy littleness ! What childish toys,
 Thy watry columns squirted to the clouds !
 Thy bason'd rivers, and imprison'd seas ! 920
 Thy mountains moulded into forms of men !
 Thy hundred-gated capitals ! Or those
 Where three days travel left us much to ride ;
 Gazing on miracles by mortals wrought,
 Arches triumphal, theatres immense, 925
 Or nodding gardens pendant in mid-air !
 Or temples proud to meet their gods half-way !
 Yet these affect us in no common kind.
 What then the force of such superior scenes ?
 Enter a temple, it will strike an awe : 930
 What awe from this the Deity has built ?
 A good man seen, tho' silent, counsel gives :
 The touch'd spectator wishes to be wise :
 In a bright mirror his own hands have made,
 Here we see something like the face of God. 935
 Seems it not then enough, to say, Lorenzo !
 To man abandon'd, " Hast thou seen the skies ?"
 And yet so thwarted nature's kind design
 By daring man, he makes her sacred awe
 (That guard from ill) his shelter, his temptation 940
 To more than common guilt, and quite inverts
 Celestial art's intent. The trembling stars
 See crimes gigantic, stalking thro' the gloom
 With front erect, that hide their head by day,
 And making night still darker by their deeds. 945
 Slumb'ring in covert, till the shades descend,
 Rapine and murder, link'd, now prowl for prey.
 The miser earths his treasure ; and the thief,
 Watching the mole, half-beggars him ere morn,
 Now plots, and foul conspiracies, awake ; 950
 And, muffling up their horrors from the moon,

Havock and devastation they prepare,
And kingdoms tott'ring in the field of blood.
Now sons of riot in mid-revel rage.

What shall I do ? suppress it ? or proclaim ?—

955

Why sleeps the thunder ? Now, Lorenzo ! now,
His best friend's couch the rank adulterer

Ascends secure ; and laughs at gods and men.

Prepost'rous madmen, void of fear or shame,

Lay their crimes bare to these chaste eyes of Heav'n ;

960

Yet shrink, and shudder at a mortal's sight !

Were moon, and stars, for villains only made ?

To guide, yet screen them, with tenebrious light ?

No ; they were made to fashion the sublime

Of human hearts, and wiser make the wise.

965

Those ends were answer'd once ; when mortals liv'd

Of stronger wing, of aquiline ascent

In theory sublime. O how unlike

Those vermin of the night this moment sung,

Who crawl on earth, and on her venom feed !

970

Those ancient sages, human stars ! they met

Their brothers of the skies, at midnight hour ;

Their counsel ask'd ; and, what they ask'd, obey'd.

The Stagirite, and Plato, he who drank

The poison'd bowl, and he of Tusculum,

975

With him of Corduba (immortal names !)

In these unbounded, and Elysian walks,

An area fit for gods, and godlike men,

They took their nightly round, thro' radiant paths

By seraphs trod ; instructed, chiefly, thus,

980

To tread in their bright footsteps here below ;

To walk in worth still brighter than the skies.

There, they contracted their contempt of earth ;

Of hopes eternal kindled, there, the fire ;

There, as in near approach, they glow'd, and grew

985

(Great visitants !) more intimate with God,

More worth to men, more joyous to themselves.

Thro' various virtues, they, with ardour, ran

The zodiac of their learn'd, illustrious lives.

In Christian hearts, O for a pagan zeal :

990

A needful, but opprobrious pray'r ! As much

Our

Our ardour less, as greater is our light.
 How monstrous this in morals ! Scarce more strange
 Would this phenomenon in nature strike,
 A sun, that froze us, or a star, that warm'd.

995

What taught these heroes of the moral world ?
 To these thou giv'st thy praise, give credit too ;
 These doctors ne'er were pension'd to deceive thee ;
 And pagan tutors are thy taste.—They taught,
 That, narrow views betray to misery :
 That, wise it is to comprehend the whole :
 That virtue rose from nature, ponder'd well,
 The single base of virtue built to Heav'n :
 That, God, and nature, our attention claim :
 That, nature is the glass reflecting God,

1000

1005

As by the sea, reflected is the sun,
 Too glorious to be gaz'd on in his sphere :
 That, mind immortal loves immortal aims :
 That, boundless mind affects a boundless space :
 That, vast surveys, and the sublime of things,
 The soul assimilate, and make her great :
 That therefore, Heav'n her glories, as a fund
 Of inspiration, thus spreads out to man.
 Such are their doctrines ; such the night inspir'd.

1010

And what more true ? What truth of greater weight ? 1015

The soul of man was made to walk the skies ;
 Delightful outlet of her prison here !

There disincumber'd from her chains, the ties
 Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large ;

There, freely can respire, dilate, extend,

1020

In full proportion let loose all her pow'rs ;

And, undeluded, grasp at something great.

Nor, as a stranger, does she wander there ;

But, wonderful herself, thro' wonder strays ;

Contemplating their grandeur, finds her own ;

1025

Dives deep in their œconomy divine,

Sits high in judgment on their various laws,

And, like a master, judges not amiss.

Hence greatly pleas'd, and justly proud, the soul

Grows conscious of her birth celestial ; breathes

1030

More life, more vigour, in her native air ;

And feels herself at home among the stars ;
And, feeling, emulates her country's praise.

What call we, then, the firmament, Lorenzo ?—

As earth the body, since, the skies sustain
The soul with food, that gives immortal life,
Call it, the noble pasture of the mind ;

1035

Which there expatiates, strengthens, and exults,
And riots thro' the luxuries of thought.

Call it, the garden of the DEITY,

1040

Blossom'd with stars, redundant in the growth
Of fruit ambrosial ; moral fruit to man.

Call it the breastplate of the true high-priest,
Ardent with gems oracular, that give,
In points of highest moment, right response ;
And ill neglected, if we prize our peace.

1045

Thus, have we found a true astrology ;

Thus, have we found a new, and noble sense,
In which alone stars govern human fates.

O that the stars (as some have feign'd) let fall
Bloodshed, and havock, on embattled realms,
And rescu'd monarchs from so black a guilt !

1050

Bourbon ! this wish how gen'rous in a foe !

Wouldst thou be great, wouldst thou become a god,

And stick thy deathless name among the stars,

1055

For mighty conquests on a needle's point ?

Instead of forging chains for foreigners,

Bastile thy tutor : grandeur all thy aim ?

As yet thou know'st not what it is : how great,

How glorious, then, appears the mind of man,

1060

When in it all the stars, and planets, roll !

And what it seems, it is : great objects make

Great minds, enlarging as their views enlarge ;

Those still more godlike, as these more divine.

And more divine than these, thou canst not see.

1065

Dazzled, o'erpow'r'd, with the delicious draught

Of miscellaneous splendors, how I reel

From thought to thought, inebriate, without end !

An Eden, this ! a Paradise unlost !

I meet the DEITY in ev'ry view,

1070

And tremble at my nakedness b. fore him !

0

O that I could but reach the tree of life !
 For here it grows, unguarded from our taste :
 No flaming sword denies our entrance here ;
 Would man but gather, he might live for ever. 1075
 Lorenzo, much of moral hast thou seen.

Of curious arts art thou more fond ? Then mark
 The mathematic glories of the skies,
 In number, weight, and measure, all ordain'd.
 Lorenzo's boasted builders, chance, and fate, 1080
 Are left to finish his ærial tow'rs ;

Wisdom, and choice, their well-known characters
 Here deep impress ; and claim it for their own.
 Tho' splendid all, no splendor void of use ;
 Use rivals beauty ; art contends with pow'r ; 1085
 No wanton waste, amid effuse expence ;

The great Economist adjusting all
 To prudent pomp, magnificently wise.
 How rich the prospect ! and for ever new !
 And newest to the man that views it most ; 1090
 For newer still in infinite succeeds.

Then, these ærial racers, O how swift !
 How the shaft loiters from the strongest string !
 Spirit alone can distance the career.
 Orb above orb ascending without end ! 1095
 Circle in circle, without end, inclos'd !

Wheel within wheel ; Ezekiel, like to thine ! *
 Like thine, it seems a vision, or a dream ;
 Tho' seen, we labour to believe it true !
 What involution ! What extent ! What swarms 1100
 Of worlds, that laugh at earth ! immensely great !

Immensely distant from each other's spheres !
 What then, the wond'rous space thro' which they roll ?
 At once it quite ingulphs all human thought ;
 'Tis comprehension's absolute defeat. 1105

Nor think thou seest a wild disorder here ;
 Thro' this illustrious chaos to the sight,
 Arrangement neat, and chastest order, reign.
 The path prescrib'd, inviolably kept,

L 3

Upbraids

* Ezekiel x. 9, 10.

Upbraids the lawless fallies of mankind. 1110
 Worlds, ever thwarting, never interfere ;
 What knots are ty'd ! How soon are they dissolv'd,
 And set the seeming marry'd planets free !
 They rove for ever, without error rove ;
 Confusion unconfus'd : nor less admire 1115
 This tumult untumultuous ; all on wing !
 In motion, all ! yet what profound repose !
 What fervid action, yet no noise ; as aw'd
 To silence, by the presence of their LORD ;
 Or hush'd, by his command, in love to man, 1120
 And bid let fall soft beams on human rest,
 Restless themselves. On yon cærulean plain,
 In exultation to their GOD, and thine,
 They dance, they sing eternal jubilee,
 Eternal celebration of his praise. 1125
 But, since their song arrives not at our ear,
 Their dance perplex'd exhibits to the sight
 Fair hieroglyphic of his peerless pow'r.
 Mark, how the labyrinthian turns they take,
 The circles intricate, and mystic maze, 1130
 Weave the grand cypher of Omnipotence ;
 To gods, how great ! how legible to man ?
 Leaves so much wonder greater wonder still ?
 Where are the pillars that support the skies ?
 What more than Atlantean shoulder props 1135
 Th'incumbent load ? What magic, what strange art,
 In fluid air these pond'rous orbs sustains ?
 Who would not think them hung in golden chains ?
 —And so they are ; in the high will of Heav'n,
 Which fixes all ; makes adamant of air, 1140
 Or air of adamant ; makes all of nought,
 Or nought of all ; if such the dread decree.
 Imagine from their deep foundations torn
 The most gigantic sons of earth, the broad
 And tow'ring Alps, all tost into the sea ; 1145
 And, light as down, or volatile as air,
 Their bulks enormous dancing on the waves,
 In time, and measure, exquisite ; while all
 The winds, in emulation of the spheres,

Tune

Tune their sonorous instruments aloft ; 1150

The concert swell, and animate the ball.

Would this appear amazing ; What, then, worlds,
In a far thinner element sustain'd,

And acting the same part, with greater skill,

More rapid movement, and for noblest ends ? 1155

More obvious ends to pass, are not these stars

The seats majestic, proud imperial thrones,

On which angelic delegates of Heav'n,

At certain periods, as the Sov'reign nods,

Discharge high trusts of vengeance, or of love ; 1160

To cloathe, in outward grandeur, grand design,

And acts most solemn still more solemnize ?

Ye citizens of air ! what ardent thanks,

What full effusion of the grateful heart,

Is due from man indulg'd in such a sight ! 1165

A sight so noble ! and a sight so kind !

It drops new truths at ev'ry new survey !

Feels not Lorenzo something stir within,

That sweeps away all period ? As these spheres

Measure duration, they no less inspire 1170

The godlike hope of ages without end.

The boundless space, thro' which these rovers take

Their restless roam, suggests the sister-thought

Of boundless time. Thus, by kind nature's skill,

To man unlabour'd, that important guest, 1175

Eternity, finds entrance at the sight :

And an eternity, for man ordain'd,

Or these his destin'd midnight counsellors,

The stars, had never whisper'd it to man.

Nature informs, but ne'er insults, her sons. 1180

Could she then kindle the most ardent wish

To disappoint it ? — That is blasphemy.

Thus, of thy creed a second article

Momentous, as th'existence of a God,

Is found (as I conceive) where rarely sought ; 1185

And thou may'st read thy soul immortal, here.

Here, then, Lorenzo, on these glories dwell ;

Nor want the gilt, illuminated roof,

That calls the wretched gay to dark delights,

Assemblées ?—This is one divinely bright ; 1190
 Here, unendanger'd in health, wealth, or fame,
 Range thro' the fairest, and the Sultan † scorn.
 He, wise as thou, no crescents holds so fair,
 As that, which on his turbant awes a world ;
 And thinks the moon is proud to copy him. 1193
 Look on her, and gain more than worlds can give,
 A mind superior to the charms of pow'r.
 Thou muffled in delusions of this life !
 Can yonder moon turn ocean in his bed,
 From side to side, in constant ebb and flow, 1200
 And purify from stench his watry realms ?
 And fails her moral influence ? Wants she pow'r
 To turn Lorenzo's stubborn tide of thought
 From stagnating on earth's infected shore,
 And purge from nuisance his corrupted heart ? 1203
 Fails her attraction when it draws to Heav'n ?
 Nay, and to what thou valu'st more, earth's joy ?
 Minds elevate, and panting for unseen,
 And defecate from sense, alone obtain
 Full relish of existence undeflow'r'd, 1210
 The life of life, the zest of worldly bliss.
 All else on earth amounts——to what ? To this :
 “ Bad to be suffer'd ; blessings to be left ; ”
 Earth's richest inventory boasts no more.
 Of higher scenes be, then, the call obey'd. 1213
 O let me gaze !—Of gazing there's no end.
 O let me think !—Thought too is wilder'd here ;
 In mid-way flight imagination tires ;
 Yet soon reprunes her wings to soar anew,
 Her point unable to forbear or gain ; 1216
 So great the pleasure, so profound the plan !
 A banquet this, where men, and angels, meet
 Eat the same manna, mingle earth, and Heav'n.
 How distant some of these nocturnal suns !
 So distant (says the sage) 'twere not absurd 1223
 To doubt, if beams, set out at nature's birth,
 Are yet arriv'd at this so foreign world ;

Tho'

† The Emperor of Turkey.

Tho' nothing half so rapid as their flight.
 An eye of awe and wonder let me roll,
 And roll for ever : who can satiate sight 1230
 In such a scene ? in such an ocean wide
 Of deep astonishment ? Where depth, height, breadth,
 Are lost in their extremes ; and where to count
 The thick sown glories in this field of fire,
 Perhaps a seraph's computation fails. 1235
 Now, go, ambition ! boast thy boundless might
 In conquest, o'er the tenth part of a grain.

And yet Lorenzo calls for miracles,
 To give his tott'ring faith a solid base.
 Why call for less than is already thine ? 1240
 Thou art no novice in theology ;
 What is a miracle ?—'Tis a reproach,
 'Tis an implicit satire, on mankind ;
 And while it satisfies, it censures too.
 To common-sense, great nature's course proclaims 1245
 A DEITY : when mankind falls asleep,
 A miracle is sent, as an alarm,
 To wake the world, and prove him o'er again,
 By recent argument, but not more strong.
 Say, which imports more plenitude of pow'r, 1250
 Or nature's laws to fix, or to repeal ?
 To make a sun, or stop his mid-career ?
 To countermand his orders, and send back
 The flaming courier to the frighted east,
 Warm'd, and astonish'd, at his ev'ning ray ? 1255
 Or bid the moon, as with her journey tir'd,
 In Ajalon's soft, flow'ry vale repose ? †
 Great things are these ; still greater, to create.
 From Adam's bow'r look down thro' the whole train
 Of miracles ;—resistless is their pow'r ? 1260
 They do not, cannot, more amaze the mind,
 Than this, call'd unmiraculous survey,
 If duly weigh'd, it rationally seen,
 If seen with human eyes. The brute, indeed,
 Sees nought but spangles here ; the fool no more. 1265

Say't

L 5

† Joshua x. 12, 13.

Say'st thou, "The course of nature governs all?"

The course of nature is the art of God.

The miracles thou call'st for, this attest;

For say, could nature nature's course controul?

But, miracles apart, who sees Him not.

1270

Nature's controuler, author, guide, and end?

Who turns his eye on nature's midnight face,

But must inquire—"What hand behind the scene

"What arm almighty, put these wheeling globes

"In motion, and wound up the vast machine?

1275

"Who rounded in his palm these spacious orbs?

"Who bowl'd them flaming thro' the dark profound,

"Num'rous as glitt'ring gems of morning dew,

"Or sparks from populous cities in a blaze,

"And set the bosom of old night on fire?

1280

"Peopled her desert, and made horror smile?

Or, if the military style delights thee,

(For stars have fought their battles, leagu'd with man)

"Who marshals this bright host? Enrols their names?

"Appoints their posts, their marches, and returns,

1285

"Punctual, at stated periods? Who disbands

"These vet'ran troops, their final duty done,

"If e'er disbanded?"—He, whose potent word,

Like the loud trumpet, levy'd first their pow'rs

In night's inglorious empire, where they slept

1290

In beds of darkness; arm'd them with fierce flames,

Arrang'd, and disciplin'd, and cloth'd in gold;

And call'd them out of chaos to the field,

Where now they war with vice and unbelief.

O let us join this army! Joining these,

1295

Will give us hearts intrepid, at that hour,

When brighter flames shall cut a darker night;

When these strong demonstrations of a God

Shall hide their heads, or tumble from their spheres,

And one eternal curtain cover all!

1300

Struck at that thought, as new awak'd, I lift

A more enlighten'd eye, and read the stars,

To man still more propitious; and their aid

(Tho' guiltless of idolatry) implore;

Nor longer rob them of their noblest name.

1305

0

O ye dividers of my time ! Ye bright
 Accomptants of my days, and months, and years,
 In your fair kalendar distinctly mark'd !
 Since that authentic, radiant register,
 Tho' man inspects it not, stands good against him ; 1310
 Since you, and years, roll on, tho' man stands still ;
 Teach me my days to number, and apply
 My trembling heart to wisdom ; * now beyond
 All shadow of excuse for fooling on,
 Age smooths our path to prudence ; sweeps aside 1315
 The snares, keen appetite, and passion, spread
 To catch stray souls ; and woe to that grey head,
 Whose folly would undo, what age has done !
 Aid, then, aid all ye stars !—Much rather, thou,
 Great artist ! Thou, whose finger set aright 1320
 This exquisite machine, with all its wheels,
 Tho' intervold, exact ; and pointing out
 Life's rapid, and irrevocable flight,
 With such an index fair, as none can miss,
 Who lifts an eye, nor sleeps till it is closed. 1325
 Open mine eye, dread Deity ! to read
 The tacit doctrine of thy works ; to see
 Things as they are, unalter'd thro' the glass
 Of worldly wishes. Time, eternity !
 ('Tis these, mismeasur'd, ruin all mankind) 1330
 Set them before me ; let me lay them both
 In equal scale, and learn their various weight.
 Let time appear a moment, as it is ;
 And let eternity's full orb, at once,
 Turn on my soul, and strike into Heav'n. 1335
 When shall I see far more than charms me now ?
 Gaze on creation's model in thy breast
 Unveil'd, nor wonder at the transcript more ?
 When, this vile, foreign, dust which smothers all
 That travel earth's deep vale, shall I shake off ? 1340
 When shall my soul her incarnation quit,
 And, re-adopted to thy blest embrace,
 Obtain her apotheosis in Thee ?

L 6

Dost

Dost think, Lorenzo! this is wand'ring wide?
 No, 'tis directly striking at the mark;
 To wake thy dead devotion was my point;
 And how I bless night's consecrating shades,
 Which to a temple turn an universe;
 Fill us with great ideas full of Heav'n,
 And antidote the pestilential earth!
 In ev'ry storm, that either frowns, or falls,
 What an asylum has the soul in pray'r!
 And what a fane is this, in which to pray!
 And what a God must dwell in such a fane!
 O what a genius must inform the skies!
 And is Lorenzo's salamander-heart
 Cold, and untouch'd, amid these sacred fires?
 O ye nocturnal sparks! Ye glowing embers,
 On Heav'n's broad hearth! who burn, or burn no more,
 Who blaze, or die, as great Jehovah's breath
 Or blows you, or forbears; assist my song;
 Pour your whole influence; exercise his heart,
 So long possess'd; and bring him back to man.
 And is Lorenzo a demurrer still?
 Pride in thy parts provokes thee to contest
 Truths, which, contested, put thy parts to shame.
 Nor shame they more Lorenzo's head than heart;
 A faithless heart, how despicably small!
 Too strait, aught great, or gen'rous, to receive!
 Fill'd with an atom! fill'd, and foul'd, with self!
 And self-mistaken! Self, that lasts an hour!
 Instincts and passions, of the nobler kind,
 Lie suffocated there, or they alone,
 Reason apart, would wake high hope; and open,
 To ravish'd thought, that intellectual sphere,
 Where, order, wisdom, goodness, Providence,
 Their endless miracles of love display,
 And promise all the truly great desire.
 The mind that would be happy, must be great;
 Great in its wishes; great in its surveys.
 Extended views a narrow mind extend;
 Push out its corrugate, expansive make,
 Which, ere long, more than planets shall embrace.

NIGHT THE NINTH.

219

A man of compass makes a man of worth ;
Divine contemplate, and become divine. 1385

As man was made for glory, and for bliss,
All littleness is in approach to woe ;
Open thy bosom, set thy wishes wide,
And let in manhood ; let in happiness ;
Admit the boundless theatre of thought 1390

From nothing, up to God ; which makes a man.
Take God from nature, nothing great is left :
Man's mind is in a pit, and nothing sees ;
Man's heart is in a jakes, and loves the mire.
Emerge from thy profound ; erect thine eye ; 1395

See thy distress ! How close art thou besieg'd !
Besieg'd by nature, the proud sceptic's foe !
Inclos'd by these innumerable worlds,
Sparkling conviction on the darkest mind,
As in a golden net of Providence, 1400

How art thou caught, sure captive of belief !
From this thy blest captivity what art,
What blasphemy to reason, sets thee free !
This scene is Heav'n's indulgent violence :
Canst thou bear up against this tide of glory ? 1405

What is earth bosom'd in these ambient orbs,
But, faith in God impos'd, and press'd on man ?
Dar'st thou still litigate thy desp'rate cause,
Spite of these num'rous, awful, witnesses,
And doubt the deposition of the skies ? 1410

O how laborious is thy way to ruin !
Laborious ? 'Tis impracticable quite ;
To sink beyond a doubt, in this debate,
With all his weight of wisdom, and of will,
And crime flagitious, I defy a fool. 1415

Some wish they did ; but no man disbelieves.
God is a spirit ; spirit cannot strike
These gross, material organs : God by man
As much is seen, as man a God can see,
In these astonishing exploits of pow'r. 1420

What order, beauty, motion, distance, size !
Concertion of design, how exquisite !
How complicate, in their divine police !

Apt

Apt means ! great ends ! consent to general good !—
 Each attribute of these material gods, 1425
 So long (and that what spacious pleas) ador'd
 A sep'rate conquest gains o'er rebel thought ;
 And leads in triumph the whole mind of man.

Lorenzo ! this may seem harangue to thee ;
 Such all is apt to seem, that thwarts our will. 1430
 And dost thou, then, demand a simple proof
 Of this great master-moral of the skies,
 Unskill'd, or disinclin'd, to read it there ?
 Since 'tis the basis, and all drops without it,
 Take it, in one compact, unbroken chain. 1435

Such proof insists on an attentive ear ;
 'Twill not make one amid a mob of thoughts,
 And, for thy notice, struggle with the world.
 Retire ;—the world shut out ;—thy thoughts call home ;—
 Imagination's airy wing repress ;— 1440

Lock up thy senses ;—let no passion stir ;—
 Wake all to reason ;—let her reign alone ;—
 Then, in thy soul's deep silence, and the depth
 Of nature's silence, midnight, thus enquire,
 As I have done ;—and shall enquire no more. 1445
 In nature's channel, thus the questions run :—

“ What am I ? and from whence ?—I nothing know,
 “ But that I am ; and, since I am, conclude
 “ Something eternal : had there e'er been nought,
 “ Nought still had been : eternal there must be. 1450

“ But what eternal ?—Why not human race ?
 “ And Adam's ancestors without an end ?—
 “ That's hard to be conceiv'd, since ev'ry link
 “ Of that long-chain'd succession is so frail ;
 “ Can ev'ry part depend, and not the whole ? 1455

“ Yet grant it true ; new difficulties rise ;
 “ I'm still quite out at sea ; nor see the shore.
 “ Whence earth, and these bright orbs ! Eternal too ?

“ Great matter was eternal ; still these orbs
 “ Would want some other father ;—much design. 1460
 “ Is seen in all their motions, all their makes ;

“ Design implies intelligence, and art ;
 “ That can't be from themselves—or man ; that art.
 “ Man

- " Man scarce can comprehend, could man bestow ?
 " And nothing greater, yet allow'd, than man.— 1465
 " Who, motion, foreign to the smallest grain,
 " Shot thro' vast masses of enormous weight ?
 " Who bid brute matter's restive lump assume
 " Such various forms, and gave it wings to fly ?
 " Has matter innate motion ? Then each atom, 1470
 " Asserting its indisputable right
 " To dance, would form an universe of dust.
 " Has matter none ? Then whence these glorious forms,
 " And boundless flights, from shapeless, and repos'd ;
 " Has matter more than motion ? Has it thought, 1475
 " Judgment, and genius ? Is it deeply learn'd
 " In mathematics ? Has it fram'd such laws,
 " Which, but to guess, a Newton * made immortal ?—
 " If so, how each sage atom laughs at me,
 " Who think a clod inferior to a man ! 1480
 " If art, to form ; and counsel, to conduct ;
 " And that with greater far than human skill ;
 " Resides not in each block ;—a Godhead reigns.—
 " Grant, then, invisible, eternal Mind ;
 " That granted, all is solv'd.—But, granting that, 1485
 " Draw I not o'er me a still darker cloud ?
 " Grant I not that which I can ne'er conceive ?
 " A being without origin, or end !—
 " Hail, human liberty ! There is no God——
 " Yet, why ? On either scheme that knot subsists ; 1490
 " Subsist it must, in God, or human race :
 " If in the last, how many knots beside,
 " Indissoluble all ?—Why choose it there,
 " Where, chosen, still subsist ten thousand more ?
 " Reject it, where, that chosen, all the rest 1495
 " Dispers'd, leave reason's whole horizon clear ?
 " This is not reason's dictate ; reason says,
 " Close with the side where one grain turns the scale ;
 " What vast preponderance is here ! Can reason
 " With louder voice exclaim—Believe a God ? 1500
 " And reason heard, is the sole mark of man.
 " What

* Sir Isaac Newton.

“ What things impossible must man think true,
 “ On any other system ? And how strange
 “ To disbelieve, thro’ mere credulity !”

If, in this chain, Lorenzo finds no flaw, 1505
 Let it for ever bind him to belief.

And where’s the link, in which a flaw he finds ?
 And if a God there is, that God how great !
 How great that pow’r, whose providential care
 Thro’ these bright orbs dark centres darts a ray ! 1510
 Of nature universal threads the whole !
 And hangs creation, like a precious gem,
 Tho’ little, on the footstool of his throne !

That little gem, how large ! a weight let fall
 From a fixt star, in ages can it reach 1515
 This distant earth ? Say then, Lorenzo, where,
 Where ends this mighty building ? Where begin
 The suburbs of creation ? Where the wall
 Whose battlements look o’er into the vale
 Of non-existence, nothing’s strange abode ? 1520
 Say, at what point of space Jehovah dropp’d
 His slacken’d line, and laid his balance by ;
 Weigh’d worlds, and measur’d infinite, no more ?
 Where, rears his terminating pillar high
 Its extra-mundane head ; and says, to gods, 1525
 In characters illustrious as the sun,

*I stand, the plan’s proud period ; I pronounce
 The work accomplish’d ; the creation clos’d :
 Shout, all ye gods ! nor shout, ye gods, alone ;
 Of all that lives, or, if devoid of life, 1530
 That rests, or rolls, ye heights, and depths, resound !
 Resound ! Resound ! ye depths, and heights, resound !*

Hard are these questions ?—Answer harder still.
 Is this the sole exploit, the single birth,
 The solitary son of pow’r divine ? 1535
 Or has th’ Almighty Father, with a breath,
 Impregnated the womb of distant space ?
 Has he not bid, in various provinces,
 Brother-creations the dark bowels burst

Of

NIGHT THE NINTH.

475

Of night primæval ; barren, now, no more ? 1540
 And he the central Sun, transpiercing all
 Those giant-generations, which disport,
 And dance, as motes, in his meridian ray ;
 That ray withdrawn, benighted, or absorb'd,
 In that abyfs of horror, whence they sprung ; 1545
 While chaos triumphs, repofseft of all
 Rival creation ravish'd from his throne ?
 Chaos ! of nature both the womb, and grave !

Think'ft thou, my scheme, Lorenzo, spreads too wide ?
 Is this extravagant ?—No ; this is juft ; 1550
 Juft, in conjecture, tho' 'twere false in fact.
 If 'tis an error, 'tis an error sprung
 From noble root, high thought of the Most High.
 But wherefore error ? Who can prove it fuch ?—
 He that can fet Omnipotence a bound. 1555

Can man conceive beyond what God can do ?
 Nothing, but quite impoffible, is hard.
 He fummons into being, with like eafe,
 A whole creation, and a fingle grain.
 Speaks he the word ? a thoufand worlds are born !— 1560
 A thoufand worlds ? There's fpace for millions more !
 And in what fpace can his great fiat fail ?
 Condemn me not, cold critic ! but indulge
 The warm imagination : Why condemn ?
 Why not indulge fuch thoughts, as fwell our hearts 1565
 With fuller admiration of that Pow'r,
 Who gives our hearts with fuch high thoughts to fwell ?
 Why not indulge in his augmented praife ?
 Darts not his glory a ftill brighter ray,
 The lefs is left to chaos, and the realms 1570
 Of hideous night, where fancy ftrays aghaft ;
 And, tho' moft talkative, makes no report ?

Still feems my thought enormous ? Think again—
 Experience' felf fhall aid thy lame belief.
 G'afles (that revelation to the fight !) 1575
 Have they not led us deep in the difclofe
 Of fine-fpun nature, exquisitely fmall,
 And, tho' demonftrated, ftill ill-conceiv'd ?
 If then, on the reverse, the mind would mount

Lu

In magnitude, what mind can mount too far, 1580
 To keep the balance, and creation poise?
 Defect alone can err on such a theme;
 What is too great, if we the cause survey?
 Stupendous architect! Thou! Thou art all!
 My soul flies up and down in thoughts of Thee, 1585
 And finds herself but at the centre still!
 I AM, thy name! existence, all thine own!
 Creation's nothing; flatter'd much, if styl'd
 "The thin, the fleeting atmosphere of God."

O for the voice—of what? of whom!—What voice 1590
 Can answer to my wants, in such ascent!
 As dares to deem one universe too small?
 Tell me, Lorenzo! (for now fancy glows,
 Fir'd in the vortex of Almighty pow'r)
 Is not this home-creation, in the map 1595
 Of universal nature, as a speck,
 Like fair Britannia in our little ball!
 Exceeding fair, and glorious, for its size,
 But, elsewhere, far out-measur'd, far outshone?
 In Fancy (for the fact beyond us lies) 1600
 Canst thou not figure it, an isle, almost
 Too small for notice, in the vast of being;
 Sever'd by mighty seas of unbuilt space,
 From other realms; from ample continents
 Of higher life, where nobler natives dwell: 1605
 Less northern, less remote from Deity,
 Glowing beneath the line of the Supreme;
 Where souls in excellence make haste, put forth
 Luxuriant growths; nor the late autumn wait
 Of human worth, but ripen soon to gods! 1610

Yet why drown fancy in such depths as these?
 Return, presumptuous rover! and confess
 The bounds of man; nor blame them, as too small.
 Enjoy we not full scope in what is seen?
 Full ample the dominions of the sun! 1615
 Full glorious to behold! how far, how wide,
 The matchless monarch, from his flaming throne,
 Lavish of lustre, throws his beams about him,
 Farther, and faster, than a thought can fly,

And

And feeds his planets with eternal fires ! 1620
 This Heliopolis, by greater far,
 Than the proud tyrant of the Nile, was built ;
 And he alone, who built it, can destroy.
 Beyond this city, why strays human thought ?
 One wonderful, enough for man to know ! 1625
 One infinite, enough for man to range !
 One firmament, enough for man to read !
 O what voluminous instruction here !
 What page of wisdom is deny'd him ? None ;
 If learning his chief lesson makes him wise. 1630
 Nor is instruction, here, our only gain ;
 There dwells a noble pathos in the skies,
 Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
 How eloquently shines the glowing pole !
 With what authority it gives its charge, 1635
 Remonstrating great truths in style sublime,
 Tho' silent, loud ! heard earth around ; above
 The planets heard ; and not unheard in hell :
 Hell has her wonder, though too proud to praise,
 Is earth, then, more infernal ? Has she those, 1640
 Who neither praise (Lorenzo !) nor admire ?
 Lorenzo's admiration, pre-engag'd,
 Ne'er ask'd the moon one question ; never held
 Least correspondence with a single star ;
 Ne'er rear'd an altar to the Queen of Heav'n 1645
 Walking in brightness ; or her train ador'd.
 Their sublunary rivals have long since
 Engross'd his whole devotion ; stars malign,
 Which made their fond astronomer run mad,
 Darken his intellect, corrupt his heart ; 1650
 Cause him to sacrifice his fame and peace
 To momentary madness, call'd delight.
 Idolater, more gross than ever kiss'd
 The lifted hand to Luna, or pour'd out
 The blood to Jove !—O Thou, to whom belongs 1655
 All sacrifice ! O Thou great Jove unfeign'd !
 Divine Instructor ! thy first volume this,
 For man's perusal ; all in capitals !
 In moon and stars Heav'n's golden alphabet !)

Emblaz'd

Emblaz'd to seize the sight ; who runs, may read ; 1660
 Who reads, can understand. 'Tis unconfin'd
 To Christian land or Jewry ; fairly writ,
 In language universal, to mankind :
 A language lofty to the learn'd ; yet plain
 To those that feed the flock, or guide the plough, 1665
 Or, from its husk, strike out the bounding grain.
 A language, worthy the great mind, that speaks !
 Preface, and comment, to the sacred page !
 Which oft refer its reader to the skies,
 As presupposing his first lesson there, 1670
 And scripture-self a fragment, that unread.
 Stupendous book of wisdom, to the wise !
 Stupendous book ! and, open'd, Night, by thee.
 By thee much open'd, I confess, O night !
 Yet more I wish ; but how shall I prevail ? 1675
 Say, gentle Night ! whose modest, maiden beams
 Give us a new creation, and present
 The world's great picture soften'd to the sight ;
 Nay, kinder far, far more indulgent still,
 Say, thou, whose mild dominion's silver key 1680
 Unlocks our hemisphere, and sets to view
 Worlds, beyond number ; worlds conceal'd by day
 Behind the proud, and envious star of noon !
 Canst thou not draw a deeper scene ? — And shew
 The mighty Potentate, to whom belong 1685
 These rich regalia pompously display'd
 To kindle that high hope ? Like him of Uz *,
 I gaze around ; I search on ev'ry side—
 O for a glimpse of Him my soul adores !
 As the chas'd hart, amid the desert waste, 1690
 Pants for the living stream ; for Him who made her,
 So pants the thirsty soul, amid the blank
 Of sublunary joys. Say, goddess ! where ?
 Where blazes his bright court ? Where burns his throne ?
 Thou know'st ; for thou art near him ; by thee round 1695
 His grand pavilion, sacred fame reports
 The sable curtain's drawn. If not, can none

Of

Of thy fair daughter-train, so swift of wing,
Who travel far, discover where he dwells ?
A star his dwelling pointed out below †.

1700

Ye Pleiades ! Arcturus ! Mazaroth !

And thou, Orion ‡ ! of still keener eye !

Say ye, who guide the wilder'd in the waves,

And bring them out of tempest into port !

On which hand must I bend my course to find him !

1705

These courtiers keep the secret of their King ;

I wake whole nights, in vain, to steal it from them.

I wake ; and, waking, climb night's radiant scale,

From sphere to sphere ; the steps by nature set

For man's ascent ; at once to tempt and aid ;

1710

To tempt his eye, and aid his tow'ring thought ;

Till it arrives at the great goal of all.

In ardent contemplation's rapid car,

From earth, as from my barrier, I set out,

How swift I moult ! Diminish'd earth recedes ;

1715

I pass the moon ; and, from her farther side,

Pierce Heav'n's blue curtain ; strike into remote ;

Where, with his lifted tube, the subtle sage

His artificial, airy journey takes,

And to celestial lengthens human sight.

1720

I pause at ev'ry planet on my road,

And ask for Him who gives their orbs to roll,

Their foreheads fair to shine. From Saturn's ring,

In which, of earths an army might be lost,

With the bold comet, take my bolder flight,

1725

Amid those sov'reign glories of the skies,

Of independent, native lustre-proud ;

The souls of systems ! and the lords of life,

Thro' their wide empires !—What behold I now ?

A wilderness of wonders burning round ;

1730

Where larger suns inhabit higher spheres ;

Perhaps the villas of descending gods !

Nor halt I here ; my toil is but begun ;

'Tis but the threshold of the Deity ;

Or, far beneath it, I am grov'ling still.

1735

Nor

† Matt. ii. 2.

‡ Names of several constellations in the Heavens.

Nor is it strange ; I built on a mistake !
 The grandeur of his works, when folly sought
 For aid, to reason sets his glory higher ;
 Who built thus high for worms (mere worms to him)
 O where, Lorenzo ! must the builder dwell ?

1740

Pause, then ; and, for a moment, here respire—
 If human thought can keep its station here.
 Where am I ?—Where is earth ?—Nay, where art thou,
 O sun ?—Is the sun turn'd recluse ?—And are
 His boasted expeditions short to mine ?

1745

To mine, how short ! On nature's alps I stand,
 And see a thousand firmaments beneath !
 A thousand systems ! as a thousand grains !
 So much a stranger, and so late arriv'd,
 How can man's curious spirit not enquire,
 What are the natives of this world sublime,
 Of this so foreign, unterrestrial sphere,
 Where mortal, untranslated, never stray'd ?

1750

“ O ye, as distant from my little home,
 “ As swiftest sun-beams in an age can fly !
 “ Far from my native element I roam,
 “ In quest of new, and wonderful, to man,
 “ What province this, of his immense domain,
 “ Whom all obey ? Or mortals here, or gods ?
 “ Ye bord'ers on the coasts of bliss ! What are you ?
 “ A colony from Heav'n ? Or, only rais'd,
 “ By frequent visit from Heav'n's neighbouring realms,
 “ To secondary gods, and half-divine ?—
 “ Whate'er your nature, this is past dispute,
 “ Far other life you live, far other tongue
 “ You talk, far other thought, perhaps, you think,
 “ Than man. How various are the works of God !
 “ But say, what thought ? Is reason here enthron'd,
 “ And absolute ? Or sense in arms against her ?
 “ Have you two lights ? Or need you no reveal'd ?
 “ Enjoy your happy realms their golden age ?
 “ And had your Eden an abstemious Eve ?
 “ Or Eve's fair daughters prove their pedigree,
 “ And ask their Adams—‘ Who would not be wife ?’
 “ Or, if your mother fell, are you redeem'd ?

1755

1760

1765

1770

1775

“ And

- " And if redeem'd—is your Redeemer scorn'd ?
 " Is this your final residence ? If not,
 " Change you your scene, translated ? Or by death ?
 " And if by death, What death ?—Know you disease ?
 " Or horrid war ?—With war, this fatal hour, 1780
 " Europa groans (so call we a small field,
 " Where kings run mad.) In our world, death deposes
 " Intemperance to do the work of age !
 " And, hanging up the quiver nature gave him,
 " As slow of execution, for dispatch 1785
 " Sends forth imperial butchers ; bids them slay
 " Their sheep (the silly sheep they fleec'd before)
 " And tofs him twice ten thousand at a meal.
 " Sit all your executioners on thrones ?
 " With you, can rage for plunder make a God ? 1790
 " And bloodshed wash out every other stain ?—
 " But you, perhaps, can't bleed : From matter gross
 " Your spirits clean, are delicately clad
 " In fine spun ether, privileg'd to soar,
 " Unloaded, uninfected : How unlike 1795
 " The lot of man ! How few of human race
 " By their own mud unmurder'd ! How we wage
 " Self-war eternal !—Is your painful day
 " Of hardy conflict o'er ? Or are you still
 " Raw candidates at school ? And have you those 1800
 " Who disaffect reverfions, as with us ?—
 " But what are we ? You never heard of man,
 " Or earth ; the bedlam of the universe !
 " Where reason (undiseas'd with you) runs mad,
 " And nurses Folly's children as her own ; 1805
 " Fond of the foulest. In the sacred mount
 " Of holiness, where reason is pronounc'd
 " Infallible, and thunders like a god ;
 " Ev'n there, by saints, the demons are outdone ;
 " What these think wrong, our saints refine to right ! 1810
 " And kindly teach dull hell her own black arts ;
 " Satan instructed, o'er their moral similes.
 " But this, how strange to you, who know not man !
 " Has the least rumour of our race arriv'd ?

" Call'd

- " Call'd here Elijah, in his flaming car * ? 1815
 " Past by you the good Enoch †, on his road
 " To those fair fields, whence Lucifer was hurl'd ;
 " Who brush'd, perhaps, your sphere, in his descent,
 " Stain'd your pure crystal ether, or let fall
 " A short eclipse from his portentous shade ? 1820
 " O ! that the fiend had lodg'd on some broad orb
 " Athwart his way ; nor reach'd his present home,
 " Then blacken'd earth with footsteps foul'd in hell,
 " Nor wash'd in ocean, as from Rome he past
 " To Britain's isle ; too, too, conspicuous there !" 1825
 But this is all digression : Where is he,
 That o'er Heav'n's battlements the felon hurl'd
 To groans, and chains, and darkness ? Where is he
 Who sees creation's summit in a vale ?
 He, whom, while man is man, he can't but seek ; 1830
 And if he finds, commences more than man ?
 O for a telescope his throne to reach !
 Tell me, ye learn'd on earth ! or blest above !
 Ye searching, ye Newtonian angels ! tell,
 Where's your great Master's orb ! His planets, where ? 1835
 Those conscious satellites, those morning stars,
 First-born of Deity ! from central love,
 By veneration most profound, thrown off ;
 By sweet attraction, no less strongly drawn ;
 Aw'd, and yet raptur'd ; raptur'd, yet serene ; 1840
 Past thought, illustrious, but with borrow'd beams ;
 In still approaching circles, still remote,
 Revolving round the sun's eternal Sire !
 Or sent, in line's direct, on embassies
 To nations—in what latitude ?—Beyond 1845
 Terrestrial thought's horizon ! and on what
 High errands sent ?—Here human effort ends ;
 And leaves me still a stranger to his throne.
 Full well it might ! I quite mistook my road.
 Born in an age more curious than devout ; 1850
 More fond to fix the place of Heav'n, or hell,
 Than studious this to shun, or that secure.

'Tis

* 2 Kings ii. 11.

† Genesis v. 24.

'Tis not the curious, but the pious path,
 That leads me to my point : Lorenzo ! know,
 Without or star, or angel, for their guide, 1855
 Who worship God, shall find him. Humble love,
 And not proud reason, keeps the door of Heav'n ;
 Love finds admission, where proud science fails.
 Man's science is the culture of his heart ;
 And not to lose his plummet in the depths 1860
 Of nature, or the more profound of God.
 Either to know, is an attempt that sets
 The wisest on a level with the fool.
 To fathom nature (ill-attempted here !)
 Past doubt, is deep philosophy above ; 1865
 Higher degrees in bliss archangels take,
 As deeper learn'd ; the deepest learning still.
 For what a thunder of Omnipotence
 (So might I dare to speak !) is seen in all !
 In man ! in earth ! in more amazing skies ! 1870
 Teaching this lesson, pride is loth to learn—
 " Not deeply to discern, not much to know,
 " Mankind was born to wonder, and adore."
 And is there cause for higher wonder still,
 Than that which struck us from our past surveys ? 1875
 Yes ; and for deeper adoration too.
 From my late airy travel unconfin'd,
 Have I learn'd nothing ? Yes, Lorenzo ! This ;
 Each of these stars is a religious house ;
 I saw their altars smoke, their incense rise, 1880
 And heard hosannas ring thro' ev'ry sphere,
 A seminary fraught with future gods.
 Nature all o'er is consecrated ground,
 Teeming with growths immortal, and divine.
 The great Proprietor's all-bounteous hand 1885
 Leaves nothing waste, but sows these fiery fields
 With seeds of reason, which to virtues rise
 Beneath his genial ray ; and, if escap'd
 The pestilential blasts of stubborn will,
 When grown mature, are gather'd for the skies. 1890
 And is devotion thought too much on earth,

M

When

When beings, so superior, homage boast,
And triumph in prostrations to the Throne?

But wherefore more of planets, or of stars?

Ethereal journies, and, discover'd there,
Ten thousand worlds, ten thousand ways devout,
All nature sending incense to the Throne,
Except the bold Lorenzos of our sphere?

1895

Op'ning the solemn sources of my soul,
Since I have pour'd, like feign'd Eridanus,
My flowing numbers o'er the flaming skies,
Nor see, of fancy, or of fact, what more

1900

Invites the muse—here turn we, and review
Our past nocturnal landscape wide:—then say,
Say, then, Lorenzo! with what burst of heart,
The whole, at once, revolving in his thought,
Must man exclaim, adoring, and, aghast?

1905

“O what a root! O what a branch is here!

“O what a father! what a family!

“Worlds! systems! and creations!—And creations, 1910

“In one agglomerated cluster, hung,

“† Great VINE! on Thee, on Thee the cluster hangs;

“The filial cluster! infinitely spread

“In glowing globes, with various being fraught;

“And drinks (nectarious draught!) immortal life. 1915

“Or, shall I say (for who can say enough?)

“A constellation of ten thousand gems,

“(And, O of what dimension! of what weight!)

“Set in one signet, flames on the right hand

“Of Majesty Divine! The blazing seal,

1920

“That deeply stamps, on all created mind,

“Indelible, His sov'reign attributes,

“Omnipotence, and Love! That, passing bound:

“And this, surpassing that. Nor stop we here,

“For want of pow'r in GOD, but thought in man. 1925

“Ev'n this acknowledg'd, leaves us still in debt;

“If greater aught, that greater all is Thine,

“Dread SIRE!—Accept this miniature of Thee;

And

" And pardon an attempt from mortal thought,
 " In which archangels might have fail'd unblam'd."

How such ideas of th'ALMIGHTY's pow'r, 1930
 And such ideas of th'ALMIGHTY's plan,
 (Ideas not absurd) distend the thought
 Of feeble mortals ! nor of them alone !
 The fulness of the DEITY breaks forth
 In inconceivables to men, and gods. 1935

Think, then, O think ; nor ever drop the thought ;
 How long must man descend, when gods adore !—
 Have I not, then, accomplish'd my proud boast ?
 Did I not tell thee, " We would mount, Lorenzo !
 " And kindle our devotion at the stars ?" 1940

And have I fail'd ? And did I flatter thee ?
 And art all adamant ? And dost confute
 All urg'd, with one irrefragable smile ?
 Lorenzo ! Mirth how miserable here !
 Swear by the stars, by HIM who made them, swear, 1945
 Thy heart, henceforth, shall be as pure as they :
 Then thou, like them, shalt shine ; like them shalt rise
 From low to lofty ; from obscure to bright ;
 By due gradation, nature's sacred law.

The stars, from whence ?—Ask chaos—He can tell. 1950
 These bright temptations to idolatry,
 From darkness, and confusion, took their birth ;
 Sons of deformity ! From fluid dregs
 Tartarean, first they rose to masses rude :
 And then, to spheres opaque ; then dimly shone ; 1955
 Then brighten'd ; then blaz'd out in perfect day.
 Nature delights in progress ; in advance
 From worse to better : but, when minds ascend,
 Progress, in part, depends upon themselves.
 Heav'n aids exertion ; greater makes the great ; 1960
 The voluntary little lessens more.

O be a man ! and thou shalt be a god !
 And half self-made !—Ambition how divine !

O thou, ambitious of disgrace alone !
 Still undevout ? Unkindled ?—Tho' high-taught, 1965
 School'd by the skies ; and pupil of the stars ;
 Rank coward to the fashionable world !

Art thou ashamed to bend thy knee to heav'n ?
 Curst fume of pride, exhal'd from deepest hell !
 Pride in religion is man's highest praise. 1970
 Bent on destruction ! and in love with death !
 Not all these luminaries, quench'd at once,
 Were half so sad, as one benighted mind,
 Which gropes for happiness, and meets despair.
 How, like a widow in her weeds, the night, 1975
 Amid her glimm'ring tapers, silent sits !
 How sorrowful, how desolate, she weeps
 Perpetual dews, and saddens nature's scene !
 A scene more sad sin makes the darken'd soul,
 All comfort kills, nor leaves one spark alive. 1980
 Tho' blind of heart, still open is thine eye :
 Why such magnificence in all thou seest ?
 Of matter's grandeur, know, one end is this,
 To tell the rational, who gazes on it——
 " Tho' that immensely great, still greater He, 1985
 " Whose breast, capacious, can embrace, and lodge,
 " Unburthen'd, nature's universal scheme ;
 " Can grasp creation with a single thought ;
 " Creation grasp ; and not exclude its SIRE."——
 To tell him farther——" It behoves him much 1990
 " To guard th'important, yet depending fate
 " Of being, brighter than a thousand suns :
 " One single ray of thought outshines them all."——
 And if man hears obedient, soon he'll soar
 Superior heights, and on his purple wing, 1995
 His purple wing bedrop'd with eyes of gold,
 Rising, where thought is now deny'd to rise,
 Look down triumphant on these dazzling spheres.
 Why then persist ?—No mortal ever liv'd
 But, dying, he pronounc'd (when words are true !) 2000
 The whole that charms thee, absolute vain ;
 Vain, and far worse !—Think thou, with dying men ;
 O condescend to think as angels think !
 O tolerate a chance for happiness !
 Our nature such, ill choice ensures ill fate ; 2005
 And hell had been, tho' there had been no God.
 Dost thou not know, my new astronomer !

Earth

NIGHT THE NINTH.

245

Earth, turning from the sun, brings night to man ?
Man turning from his God, brings endless night ;
Where thou canst read no morals, find no friend,
Amend no manners, and expect no peace.

2010

How deep the darkness ! and the groan how loud !
And far, how far, from lambent are the flames !
Such is Lorenzo's purchase ! such his praise !

The proud, the politic, Lorenzo's praise !

2015

Tho' in his ear, and level'd at his heart,
I've half read o'er the volume of the skies.

For think not thou hast heard all this from me ;
My song but echoes what great nature speaks.

What has she spoken ? Thus the goddess spoke,

2020

Thus speaks for ever :—" Place at nature's head,

" A Sov'reign, which o'er all things rolls his eye,

" Extends his wing, promulgates his commands,

" But, above all, diffuses endless good ;

" To whom for sure redress, the wrong'd may fly ;

2025

" The vile for mercy ; and the pain'd for peace :

" By whom, the various tenants of these spheres,

" Diversify'd in fortunes, place, and powers,

" Rais'd in enjoyment, as in worth they rise,

" Arrive at length (if worthy such approach)

2030

" At that blest fountain-head, from which they stream ;

" Where conflict past redoubles present joy ;

" And present joy looks forward on increase ;

" And that on more ; no period ! ev'ry step

" A double boon ! a promise, and a bliss."

2035

How easy fits this scheme on human hearts !

It suits their make ; it soothes their vast desires ;

Passion is pleas'd, and reason asks no more ;

'Tis rational ! 'Tis great !—But what is thine ?

It darkens ! shocks ! excruciates ! and confounds !

2040

Leaves us quite naked, both of help and hope,

Sinking from bad to worse ; few years, the sport

Of fortune ; then, the morsel of despair.

Say, then, Lorenzo ! (for thou know'st it well)

What's vice ? Mere want of compass in our thought.

2045

Religion, what ?—The proof of common sense ;

How art thou whooted, where the least prevails !

Is it my fault, if these truths call thee fool ?
 And thou shalt never be miscall'd by me.
 Can neither shame, nor terror, stand thy friend ? 2030
 And art thou still an insect in the mire ?
 How, like thy guardian angel, have I flown ;
 Snatch'd thee from earth ; escorted thee thro' all
 Th' ethereal armies ; walkt thee, like a god,
 Thro' splendors of first magnitude, arrang'd 2055
 On either hand ; clouds thrown beneath thy feet ;
 Close-cruis'd on the bright paradise of God ;
 And almost introduc'd thee to the throne !
 And art thou still carousing, for delight,
 Rank poison ; first, fermenting to mere froth, 2060
 And then subsisting into final gall ?
 To beings of sublime, immortal make,
 How shocking is all joy, whose end is sure !
 Such joy more shocking still, the more it charms !
 And dost thou choose what ends are well-begun, 2065
 And infamous, as short ? And dost thou choose
 (Thou, to whose palate glory is so sweet)
 To wade into perdition, thro' contempt,
 Not of poor bigots only, but thy own ?
 For I have peep'd into thy cover'd heart, 2070
 And seen it blush beneath a boastful brow ;
 For, by strong guilt's most violent assault,
 Conscience is but disabled, not destroy'd.
 O thou most awful being, and most vain !
 Thy will how frail ! how glorious is thy pow'r ! 2075
 Tho' dread eternity has sown her seeds
 Of bliss, and woe, in thy despotic breast ;
 Tho' Heav'n, and hell, depend upon thy choice !
 A butterfly comes cross, and both are fled.
 Is this the picture of a rational ? 2080
 This horrid image, shall it be most just ?
 Lorenzo ! No : It cannot—shall not be,
 If there is force in reason ; or, in sounds,
 Chanted beneath the glimpses of the moon,
 A magic, at this planetary hour, 2085
 When slumber locks the gen'ral lip, and dreams
 Thro' senseless mazes hunt souls un-inspir'd.

Attend

Attend—The sacred mysteries begin—
 My solemn night-born adjuration hear :
 Hear, and I'll raise thy spirit from the dust ; 2090
 While the stars gaze on this enchantment new ;
 Enchantment not infernal, but divine !
 " By silence, death's peculiar attribute ;
 " By darkness, guilt's inevitable doom ;
 " By darkness, and by silence, sisters dread ! 2095
 " That draw the curtain round night's ebon throne,
 " And raise ideas, solemn as the scene !
 " By night, and all of awful, night presents
 " To thought or sense (of awful much, to both,
 " The goddess brings !) By these her trembling fires, 2100
 " Like Vesta's, ever burning ; and, like hers,
 " Sacred to thoughts immaculate, and pure !
 " By these bright orators, that prove, and praise,
 " And press thee to revere, the DEITY ;
 " Perhaps too, aid thee, when rever'd awhile, 2105
 " To reach his throne ; as stages of the soul,
 " Thro' which, at diff'rent periods, she shall pass,
 " Refining gradual, for her final height,
 " And purging off some dross at ev'ry sphere !
 " By this dark pall thrown o'er the silent world ! 2110
 " By the world's kings, and kingdoms, most renown'd,
 " From short ambition's zenith set for ever ;
 " Sad presage to vain boasters, now in bloom !
 " By the long list of swift mortality,
 " From Adam downward to this ev'ning knell, 2115
 " Which midnight waves in fancy's startled eye ;
 " And shocks her with an hundred centuries,
 " Round death's black banner throng'd in human thought
 " By thousands, now resigning their last breath,
 " And calling thee—wert thou so wise to hear ! 2120
 " By tombs o'er tombs arising ; human earth
 " Ejected to make room for—human earth.
 " The monarch's terror ! and the sexton's trade !
 " By pompous obsequies, that shun the day,
 " The torch funereal, and the nodding plume, 2125
 " Which makes poor man's humiliation proud ;
 " Boast of our ruin ! Triumph of our dust !

" By the damp vault that weeps o'er royal bones ;
 " And the pale lamp that shews the ghastly dead,
 " More ghastly, thro' the thick incumbent gloom ! 2130
 " By visits (if there are) from darker scenes,
 " The gliding spectre ! and the groaning grave !
 " By groans, and graves, and miseries that groan
 " For the grave's shelter ! By desponding men,
 " Senseless to pains of death, from pangs of guilt ! 2135
 " By guilt's last audit ! By yon moon in blood,
 " The rocking firmament, the falling stars,
 " And thunder's last discharge, great nature's knell !
 " By second chaos ; and eternal night."—
 Be wise—Nor let Philander blame my charm ; 2140
 But own not ill-discharg'd my double debt,
 Love to the living ; duty to the dead.

For know, I'm but executor ; he left
 This moral legacy ! I make it o'er
 By his command ; Philander hear in me ; 2145
 And heav'n in both.—If deaf to these, Oh ! hear
 Fiorello's tender voice ; his wheel depends
 On thy resolve ; it trembles at thy choice ;
 For his sake—love thyself : Example strikes
 All human hearts ; a bad example more ; 2150
 More still a father's ; that ensure his ruin.
 As parent of his being, wouldst thou prove
 Th'unnatural parent of his miseries,
 And make him curse the being which thou gav'st ?
 Is this the blessing of so fond a father ? 2155
 If careless of Lorenzo ! spare, Oh ! spare,
 Florello's father, and Philander's friend ;
 Florello's father ruin'd, ruins him ;
 And from Philander's friend the world expects
 A conduct, no dishonour to the dead. 2160
 Let passion do, what nobler motive should ;
 Let love, and emulation, rise in aid
 To reason ; and persuade thee to be—blest.

This seems not a request to be deny'd ;
 Yet (such th'infatuation of mankind !) 2165
 'Tis the most hopeless, man can make to man.
 Shall I, then, rise in argument, and warmth ;
 And

And urge Philander's posthumous advice,
 From topics yet unbroach'd?—
 But Oh! I faint! My spirits fail!—Nor strange! 2170
 So long on wing, and in no middle clime;
 To which my great Creator's glory call'd;
 And calls—but now, in vain. Sleep's dewy wand
 Has strok'd my drooping lids, and promises
 My long arrear of rest; the downy god 2175
 (Wont to return with our returning peace)
 Will pay, ere long, and blefs me with repose.
 Haste, haste, sweet stranger! from the peasant's cot,
 The ship-boy's hammock, or the soldier's straw,
 Whence sorrow never chac'd thee; with thee bring, 2180
 Not hideous visions, as of late; but draughts
 Delicious of well-tasted, cordial, rest;
 Man's rich restorative; his balmy bath,
 That supples, lubricates, and keeps in play,
 The various movements of this nice machine, 2185
 Which asks such frequent periods of repair.
 When tir'd with vain rotations of the day,
 Sleep winds us up for the succeeding dawn;
 Fresh we spin on, till sickness clogs our wheels,
 Or death quite breaks the spring, and motion ends. 2190
 When will it end with me?

———“ THOU only know'st!

“ Thou! whose broad eye, the future and the past,
 “ Joins to the present; making one of three
 “ To mortal thought! Thou know'st, and thou alone,
 “ All-knowing!—All-unknown!—And yet well known;
 “ Near, tho' remote! and, tho' unfathom'd, felt! 2196
 “ And tho' invisible, for ever seen!
 “ And seen in all! The great and the minute;
 “ Each globe above, with its gigantic race,
 “ Each flower, each leaf, with its small people swarm'd 2200
 “ (Those puny vouchers of Omnipotence!)
 “ To the first thought, that asks “ From whence? declare
 M 5 “ Their

- " Their common source. Thou fountain running o'er
 " In rivers of communicated joy !
 " Who gav'st us speech for far, far humbler themes ! 2205
 " Say, by what name shall I presume to call
 " Him I see burning in these countless suns,
 " As Moses in the bush ? * Illustrious mind ;
 " The whole creation, less, far less, to thee,
 " Than that to the creation's ample round. 2210
 " How shall I name thee ?—How my labouring soul
 " Heaves underneath the thought, too big for birth !
 " Great system of perfection ! Mighty cause
 " Of causes mighty ! cause uncaus'd ! Sole root
 " Of nature, that luxuriant growth of God ! 2215
 " First father of effects ! that progeny
 " Of endless series ; where the golden chains
 " Last link admits a period, who can tell ?
 " Father of all that is or heard, or hears !
 " Father of all that is or seen, or sees ! 2220
 " Father of all that is, or shall arise !
 " Father of this immeasurable mass
 " Of matter multiform ; or dense, or rare ;
 " Opaque, or lucid ; rapid, or at rest ;
 " Minute, or passing bound ! In each extreme 2225
 " Of like amaze, and mystery, to man.
 " Father of these bright millions of the night ! †
 " Of which the least full godhead had proclaim'd,
 " And thrown the gazer on his knee—Or, say,
 " Is appellation higher still, thy choice ? 2230
 " Father of matter's temporary lords !
 " Father of spirits ; Nobler offspring ! sparks
 " Of high paternal glory ; rich endow'd
 " With various measures, and with various modes
 " Of instinct, reason, intuition ; beams 2235
 " More pale, or bright from day divine, to break
 " The dark of matter organiz'd (the ware
 " Of all created spirit) ; beams, that rise
 " Each over other in superior light,
 " Till the last ripens into lustre strong, 2240
 Of

* Exod. iii. 2.

† The stars.

" Of next approach to godhead. Father fond
 " (Far fonder than e'er bore that name on earth)
 " Of intellectual beings ! beings blest
 " With pow'rs to please thee ; not of passive ply
 " To laws they know not ; beings lodg'd in seats. 2245
 " Of well-adapted joys, in diff'rent domes
 " Of this imperial palace for thy sons ;
 " Of this proud, populous, well-policy'd,
 " Tho' boundless habitation, plann'd by thee ;
 " Whose several clans their several climates suit ; 2250
 " And transposition, doubtless, would destroy.
 " Or, oh ! indulge, Immortal King ! indulge
 " A title, less august, indeed, but more
 " Endearing ; ah ! how sweet in human ears,
 " Sweet in our ears, and triumph in our hearts ! 2255
 " *Father of immortality to man !*
 " A theme that * lately set my soul on fire.—
 " And thou the next ! yet equal ! Thou, by whom
 " That blessing was convey'd ; far more ! was bought
 " Ineffable the price ! by whom all worlds 2260
 " Were made ; and one, redeemed ! illustrious light
 " From light illustrious ! Thou, whose regal power,
 " Finite in time, but infinite in space,
 " On more than adamantin basis fix'd,
 " O'er more, far more, than diadems, and thrones, 2265
 " Inviolably reigns ; the dread of gods !
 " And Oh ! the friend of man ! beneath whose foot,
 " And by the mandate of whose awful nod,
 " All regions, revolutions, fortunes, fates,
 " Of high, of low, of mind, and matter, roll 2270
 " Thro' the short channels of expiring time,
 " Or shoreless ocean of eternity,
 " Calm, or tempestuous (as thy spirit breathes)
 " In absolute subjection !—And, O Thou
 " The glorious third ! † distinct not separate ! 2275
 " Beaming from both ! with both incorporate !
 " And (strange to tell !) incorporate with dust !
 " By condescension, as thy glory, great,

M 6

Enclin'd

* Nights the Sixth and Seventh.

† The Holy Ghost.

- " Enshrin'd in man ! Of human hearts, if pure,
 " Divine inhabitant ! The tie divine 2280
 " Of heav'n with distant earth ! By whom I trust,
 " If not inspir'd) uncensur'd this address
 " To thee, to them—To whom ? Mysterious Power !
 " Reveal'd—yet unreveal'd ! Darknefs in light !
 " Number in unity ! our joy ! our dread ! 2285
 " The triple bolt that lays all wrong in ruin !
 " That animates all right, the triple sun !
 " Sun of the soul ! her never-setting sun !
 " Triune, unutterable, unconceiv'd,
 " Absconding, yet demonstrable, great God ! 2290
 " Greater than greatest ! better than the best !
 " Kinder than kindest ! with soft pity's eye,
 " Or (stronger still to speak it) with thine own,
 " From thy bright home, from that high firmament,
 " Where thou, from all eternity, hast dwelt ; 2295
 " Beyond archangels' unassisted ken ;
 " From far above what mortals highest call ?
 " From elevation's pinnacle ; Look down,
 " Through—what ? Confounding interval ! thro' all,
 " And more, than lab'ring fancy can conceive ; 2300
 " Thro' radiant ranks of essences unknown ;
 " Thro' hierarchies from hierarchies detach'd
 " Round various banners of Omnipotence,
 " With endless change of rapt'rous duties fir'd ;
 " Thro' wond'rous beings interposing swarms, 3205
 " All clust'ring at the call, to dwell in thee ;
 " Thro' this wide waste of worlds ; this vista vast,
 " All fanded o'er with suns ; suns turn'd to night
 " Before thy feeblest beam—Look down, down, down,
 " On a poor breathing particle in dust, 2310
 " Or lower—an immortal in his crimes.
 " High crimes forgive ; forgive his virtues too !
 " Those smaller faults, half-converts to the right.
 " Nor let me close these eyes, which never more
 " May see the sun (tho' night's descending scale 2315
 " Now weighs up morn) unpity'd and unblest !
 " In my displeasure dwells eternal pain ;
 " Pain, our aversion ; pain, which strikes me now ;
 " And

" And since all pain is terrible to man,
 " Tho' transient, terrible ; at thy good hour, 2320
 " Gently, ah gently, lay me in my bed,
 " My clay-cold bed ! by nature, now, so near ;
 " By nature, near ; still nearer by disease !
 " Till then, be this an emblem of my grave :
 " Let it out-preach the preacher ; ev'ry night 2325
 " Let it out-cry the boy at Philip's * ear ;
 " That tongue of death ! That herald of the tomb !
 " And when (the shelter of thy wing implor'd)
 " My senses sooth'd, shall sink in soft repose ;
 " O sink this truth still deeper in my soul, 5330
 " Suggested by my pillow, sign'd by fate,
 " First, in fate's volume, at the page of man—
 " *Man's sickly soul, tho' turn'd and toss'd for ever,*
 " *From side to side, can rest on nought but thee ;*
 " *Here, in full trust ; hereafter in full joy ;* 2335
 " On thee, the promis'd, sure, eternal down
 " Of spirits, toil'd in travel thro' this vale.
 " Nor of that pillow shall my soul despond ;
 " For—Love almighty ! Love almighty ! (Sing,
 " Exult, creation ;) Love almighty, reigns ! 2340
 " That death of death ; That cordial of despair !
 " And loud eternity's triumphant song !
 " Of whom no more :—For, O thou Patron God ; †
 " Thou God and mortal ! Thence more God to man !
 " Man's theme eternal ! Man's eternal theme ! 2345
 " Thou can'st not 'scape uninjur'd from our praise.
 " Uninjur'd from our praise can he escape,
 " Who, disembosom'd from the Father, bows
 " The heav'n of heav'ns, to kiss the distant earth !
 " Breathes out in agonies a sinless soul ! 2350
 " Against the cross, death's iron sceptre breaks !
 " From famish'd ruin plucks her human prey ;
 " Throws wide the gates celestial to his foes !
 " Their gratitude for such a boundless debt,
 " Deputes their suff'ring brothers to receive ! 2355
 " And, if deep human guilt in payment fails ;
 " As

* Philip king of Macedon.

† Jesus Christ.

" As deeper guilt, prohibits our despair!

" Enjoins it, as our duty to rejoice!

" And (to close all) omnipotently kind,

" * *Takes his delights among the sons of men?*" 2360

What words are these!—And did they come from heav'n?

And were they spoke to man? To guilty man?

What are all mysteries to love like this!

The song of angels, all the melodies

Of choral gods, are wasted in the sound; 2365

Heal and exhilarate the broken heart,

Tho' plung'd before, in horrors dark as night;

Rich prelibation of consummate joy!

Nor wait we dissolution to be blest.

This final effort of the moral muse, 2370

How justly † titled! Not for me alone;

For all that read; what spirit of support,

What height of Consolation, crown my song!

Then farewell night! Of darkness now no more:

Joy breaks; shines; triumphs; 'tis eternal day. 2375

Shall that which rises out of nought complain

Of a few evils, paid with endless joys?

My soul! henceforth, in sweetest union join

The two supports of human happiness,

Which some erroneous think can never meet; 2380

True taste of life, and constant thought of death;

The thought of death, sole victor of its dread!

Hope be thy joy; and probity thy skill;

Thy patron he, whose diadem has dropp'd

Yon gems of heav'n; eternity, thy prize: 2385

And leave the racers of the world their own,

Their feather, and their froth, for endless toils.

They part with all for that which is not bread;

They mortify, they starve, on wealth, fame, power;

And laugh to scorn, the fools that aim at more. 2390

How must a spirit, late escap'd from earth,

Suppose Philander's, Lucia's, or Narcissa's,

The truth of things new-blazing in its eye,

Look back, astonish'd, on the ways of men,

Whose

* Prov. chap. viii. 31.

† The Consolation.

NIGHT THE NINTH.

255

Whose lives, whose drift is to forget their graves ! 2395

And when our present privilege is past,
To scourge us with due sense of its abuse,
The same astonishment will seize us all.

What then must pain us, would preserve us now.

Lorenzo ! 'tis not yet too late : Lorenzo ! 2400

Seize wisdom, ere 'tis torment to be wise ;

That is, seize wisdom, ere she seizes thee,

For what, my small philosopher ! is hell ?

'Tis nothing, but full knowledge of the truth,

When truth, resisted long, is sworn our foe ; 2405

And calls eternity to do her right.

Thus, darkness aiding intellectual light,

And sacred silence whisp'ring truths divine,

And truths divine converting pain to peace,

My song the midnight raven has outwing'd, 2410

And shot, ambitious of unbounded scenes,

Beyond the flaming limits of the world,

Her gloomy flight. But what avails the flight

Of fancy, when our hearts remain below ?

Virtue abounds in flatterers, and foes ; 2415

'Tis pride, to praise her ; penance to perform.

To more than words, to more than worth of tongue,

Lorenzo ! rise, at this auspicious hour ;

An hour, when heav'n's most intimate with man ;

When, like a falling star, the ray divine 2420

Glides swift into the bosom of the just ;

And just are all, determin'd to reclaim ;

Which sets that title high, within thy reach.

Awake then : Thy Philander calls : Awake !

Thou, who shalt wake, when the creation sleeps ; 2425

When, like a taper, all these suns expire !

When time, like him of Gaza * in his wrath,

Plucking the pillars that support the world,

In nature's ample ruins lies intomb'd ;

And midnight, universal midnight, reigns. 2430

* Sampson, Judges xvi. 29, 30.

A

PARAPHRASE

ON

PART OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

It is disputed among the critics, who was the author of the book of Job. Some give it to Moses; some to others. As I was engaged in this little performance, some arguments occurred to me which favour the former of these opinions; which arguments I have flung into the following notes, where little else is to be expected.

I use the word Paraphrase, because I want another which might better answer to the uncommon liberties I have taken. I have omitted, added, and transposed. The mountain, the comet, the sun, and other parts, are entirely added: The peacock, the lion, &c. are much enlarged. And I have thrown the whole into a method more suitable to our notions of regularity. The judicious, if they compare this piece with the original, will, I flatter myself, find the reasons for the great liberties I have indulged myself in through the whole.

Longinus

Longinus has a chapter on Interrogations, which shews that they contribute much to the sublime. This speech of the Almighty is made up of them. Interrogation seems indeed the proper style of majesty incens'd. It differs from any other manner of reproof, as much as bidding a person execute himself, does from a common execution; for he that asks the guilty a proper-question, makes him, in effect, pass sentence on himself.

THRICE happy Job long liv'd in regal state;
 Nor saw the sumptuous east a prince so great;
 Whose worldly stores in such abundance flow'd,
 Whose heart with such exalted virtue glow'd.
 At length misfortunes take their turn to reign, 5
 And ills on ills succeed; a dreadful train!
 What now but deaths, and poverty, and wrong,
 The sword wide-wasting, the reproachful tongue,
 And spotted plagues, that mark'd his limbs all o'er
 So thick with pains, they wanted room for more? 10
 A change so sad what mortal heart could bear?
 Exhausted woe had left him nought to fear;
 But gave him all to grief. Low earth he prest,
 Wept in the dust, and sorely smote his breast.
 His friends around the deep affliction mourn'd. 15
 Felt all his pangs, and groan for groan return'd;
 In anguish of their hearts their mantles rent,
 And sev'n long days in solemn silence spent;

A debt

Thrice happy Job, &c.] The Almighty's speech, chap. xxxviii, &c. which is what I paraphrase in this little work, is by much the finest part of the noblest, and most ancient poem in the world. Bishop Patrick says, its grandeur is as much above all other poetry as thunder is louder than a whisper. In order to set this distinguished part of the poem in a fuller light, and give the reader a clearer conception of it, I have abridged the preceding and subsequent parts of the poem, and joined them to it: so that this piece is a sort of an epitome of the whole book of Job.

A debt of rev'rence to distress so great !
 Then Job contain'd no more ; but curs'd his fate. 20
 His day of birth its inauspicious light,
 He wishes sunk in shades of endless night,
 And blotted from the year ; nor fears to crave
 Death, instant death ; impatient for the grave,
 That seat of peace, that mansion of repose, 25
 Where rest and mortals are no longer foes ;
 Where counsellors are hush'd, and mighty kings
 (O happy turn !) no more are wretched things.
 His words were daring, and displeas'd his friends ;
 His conduct they reprove, and he descends ; 30
 And now they kindled into warm debate,
 And sentiments oppos'd with equal heat ;
 Fixt in opinion, both refuse to yield,
 And summon all their reason to the field :
 So high at length their arguments were wrought, 35
 They reach'd the last extent of human thought :
 A pause ensu'd.—When, lo ! heav'n interpos'd,
 And awfully the long contention clos'd.
 Full o'er their heads, with terrible surprise,
 A sudden whirlwind blacken'd all the skies : 40
 (They saw, and trembled !) from the darkness broke
 A dreadful voice, and thus th' Almighty spoke.
 Who gives his tongue a loose so bold and vain,
 Censures, my conduct, and reproves my reign ?
 Lifts up his thoughts against me from the dust, 45
 And tells the world's Creator what is just ?
 Of late so brave, now lift a dauntless eye,
 Face my demand, and give it a reply :

Where

———From the darkness broke
 A dreadful voice, and thus th' Almighty spoke.]

The book of Job is well known to be dramatic, and, like the tragedies of old Greece, is fiction built on truth. Probably, this most noble part of it, the Almighty speaking out of the whirlwind, so suitable to the after-practice of the Greek stage, when there happened 'dignis vindice nodus,' is fictitious ; but it is a fiction more agreeable to the time in which Job lived, than any since. Frequent, before the law, were the appearances of the Almighty after this manner, Exodus ch. xix. Ezekiel ch. i. &c. Hence is he said to " dwell " in thick darkness : And have his way in the whirlwind."

Where didst thou dwell at nature's early birth?
 Who laid foundations for the spacious earth? 50
 Who on its surface did extend the line,
 Its form determine, and its bulk confine?
 Who fix'd the corner-stone? What hand, declare,
 Hung it on nought, and fasten'd it in air;
 When the bright morning stars in concert sung, 55
 When heav'n's high arch with loud hosannas rung;
 When shouting sons of God the triumph crown'd,
 And the wide concave thunder'd with the sound?

Earth's num'rous kingdoms, hast thou view'd them all;
 And can thy span of knowledge grasp the ball? 60
 Who heav'd the mountain, which sublimely stands,
 And casts its shadows into distant lands?

Who, stretching forth his sceptre o'er the deep,
 Can that wide world in due subjection keep?
 I broke the globe, I scoop'd its hollow side, 65
 And did a basin for the floods provide?
 I chain them with my word; the boiling sea,
 Work'd up in tempests, hears my great decree;
 "Thus far thy floating tide shall be convey'd;
 "And here, O main, be thy proud billows staid." 70

Hast thou explor'd the secrets of the deep,
 Where, shut from use, unnumber'd treasures sleep:
 Where, down a thousand fathoms from the day,
 Springs the great fountain, mother of the sea?
 Those gloomy paths did thy bold foot e'er tread, 75
 Whole worlds of waters rolling o'er thy head?

Hath the cleft centre open'd wide to thee?
 Death's inmost chambers didst thou ever see?

E'er

Thus far thy floating tide, &c.] There is a very great air in all that precedes; but this is signally sublime. We are struck with admiration to see the vast and ungovernable ocean receiving commands, and punctually obeying them; to find it like a managed horse, raging, tossing, and foaming, but by the rule and direction of its master. This passage yields in sublimity to that of "Let there be light," &c. so much only, as the absolute government of nature yields to the creation of it.

The like spirit in these two passages is no bad concurrent argument, that Moses is author of the book of Job.

E'er knock'd at his tremendous gate, and wade
 To the black portal thro' th' incumbent shade ? 80
 Deep are those shades : but shades still deeper hide
 My counsels from the ken of human pride.

Where dwells the light ? In what refulgent dome ?
 And where has darkness made her dismal home ?
 Thou know'st it, no doubt, since thy large heart is fraught
 With ripen'd wisdom thro' long ages brought ; 85
 Since nature was call'd forth when thou wast by,
 And into being rose beneath thine eye !

Are mists begotten ? Who their father knew ?
 From whom descend the pearly drops of dew ? 90
 To bind the stream by night, what hand can boast,
 Or whiten morning with the hoary frost ?
 Whose pow'rful breath, from northern regions blown,
 Touches the sea, and turns it into stone ;
 A sudden desert spreads o'er realms defac'd, 95
 And lays one half of the creation waste ?

Thou know'st it me not ; thy blindness cannot see
 How vast a distance parts thy God from thee.
 Canst thou in whirlwinds mount aloft ? Canst thou
 In clouds and darkness wrap thy awful brow ? 100

And when day triumphs in meridian light,
 Put forth thy hand, and shade the world with night ?
 Who launch'd the clouds in air, and bid them roll
 Suspended seas aloft, from pole to pole ?

Who can refresh the burning sandy plain, 105
 And quench the summer with a waste of rain ?
 Who in rough deserts, far from human toil,
 Made rocks bring forth, and desolation smile ?
 There blooms the rose, where human face ne'er shone,
 And spreads its beauties to the sun alone. 110

To check the show'r, who lifts his hand on high,
 And shuts the sluices of th' exhausted sky ;
 When earth no longer mourns her gaping veins,
 Her naked mountains, and her russet plains ;
 But, new in life, a cheerful prospect yields 115
 Of shining rivers, and of verdant fields ;
 When groves and forests lavish all their bloom,
 And earth and heav'n are fill'd with rich perfume ?

PART OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

261

Hast thou e'er scal'd my wintry skies, and seen
Of hail and snow my northern magazine ? 120

These the dread treasures of mine anger are,
My fund of vengeance for the day of war,
When c'ouds rain death, and storms, at my command,
Rage thro' the world, or waste a guilty land.

Who taught the rapid winds to fly so fast, 125
Or shakes the centre with an eastern blast ?

Who from the skies can a whole deluge pour ?
Who strikes thro' nature with a solemn roar
Of dreadful thunder, points it where to fall,
And in fierce lightning wraps the flying ball ? 130
Not he who trembles at the darted fires,
Falls at the sound, and in the flash expires.

Who drew the comet out to such a size,
And pour'd his flaming train o'er half the skies ?
Did thy resentment hang him out ? Does he 135
Glare on the nations, and denounce from thee ?

Who on low earth can moderate the rein,
That guides the stars along th' ethereal plain ?
Appoint their seasons, and direct their course,
Their lustre brighten, and supply their force ? 140

Canst thou the skies benevolence restrain,
And cause the Pleiades to shine in vain ?
Or, when Orion sparkles from his sphere,
Thaw the cold season, and unbind the year ?
Bid Mazzaroth his destin'd station know, 145
And teach the bright Arcturus where to glow ?
Mine is the night, with all her stars ; I pour
Myriads, and myriads I reserve in store.

Dost thou pronounce where day-light shall be born,
And draw the purple curtain of the morn ; 150

Awake the sun, and bid him come away,
And glad thy world with his obsequious ray ?
Hast thou, enthron'd in flaming glory driv'n
Triumphant round the spacious ring of heav'n ?
That pomp of light, what hand so far displays, 155
That distant earth lies basking in the blaze ?

Who did the soul with her rich pow'rs invest,
And light up reason in the human breast,

To

To shine, with fresh increase of lustre, bright,
When stars and sun are set in endless night? 160

To these my various questions make reply:

Th'Almighty spoke; and, speaking, shook the sky.

What then, Chaldean Sire, was thy surprise?

Thus thou, with trembling heart, and down-cast eyes:

"Once and again, which I in groans deplore, 165

"My tongue has err'd; but shall presume no more.

"My voice is in eternal silence bound,

"And all my soul falls prostrate to the ground."

He ceas'd: when, lo! again th'Almighty spoke;

The same dread voice from the black whirlwind broke. 170

Can that arm measure with an arm divine?

And canst thou thunder with a voice like mine?

Or in the hollow of thy hand contain

The bulk of waters, the wide-spreading main,

When, mad with tempests, all the billows rise 175

In all their rage, and dash the distant skies?

Come forth, in beauty's excellence array'd;

And be the grandeur of thy pow'r display'd;

Put on Omnipotence, and frowning make

The spacious round of the creation shake; 180

Dispatch thy vengeance, bid it overthrow

Triumphant vice, lay lofty tyrants low,

And crumble them to dust. When this is done,

I grant thy safety lodg'd in thee alone:

Of thee thou art, and may'st undaunted stand 185

Behind the buckler of thine own right hand.

Fond man! the vision of a moment made!

Dream of a dream! and shadow of a shade!

What worlds hast thou produc'd, what creatures fram'd,

What insects cherish'd, that thy God is blam'd? 190

When pain'd with hunger, the wild raven's brood

Calls upon God, importunate for food,

Who

When pain'd with hunger, the wild raven's brood, &c.] Another argument that Moses was the author, is, that most of the creatures here mentioned are Egyptian. The reason given why the raven is particularly mentioned as an object of the care of Providence, is, because, by her clamorous and importunate voice, she particularly seems

Who hears their cry, who grants their hoarse request,
And still the clamour of the craving nest?

Who in the cruel ostrich has subdu'd
A parent's care, and fond inquietude?
While far she flies, her scatter'd eggs are found,
Without an owner, on the sandy ground;
Cast out on fortune, they at mercy lie,
And borrow life from an indulgent sky;
Adopted by the sun in blaze of day,
They ripen under his prolific ray.
Unmindful she, that some unhappy tread
May crush her young in their neglected bed.
What time she skims along the field with speed,
She scorns the rider, and pursuing steed.

How

seems always calling upon it; thence *νοτατω ὁ νοταξ* is to ask earnestly, *Ælian*, l. ii. &c. And since there were ravens on the banks of the Nile more clamorous than the rest of that species, those probably are meant in this place.

Who in the cruel ostrich has subdu'd, &c.] There are many instances of this bird's stupidity: let two suffice.

First, it covers its head in the reeds, and thinks itself all out of sight.

Stat lumine clauso
Ridendum revoluta caput; creditque latere,
Quæ non ipsa videt.

Claud.

Secondly, They that go in pursuit of them, draw the skin of an ostrich's neck on one hand, which proves a sufficient lure to take them with the other.

They have so little brain, that Heliogabalus had six hundred for his supper.

Here we may observe, that our judicious as well as sublime author, just touches the great points of distinction in each creature, and then hastens to another. A description is exact when you cannot add, but what is common to another thing; nor withdraw, but something peculiarly belonging to the thing described. A likeness is lost in too much description, as a meaning often in too much illustration.

What time she skims along the field, &c.] Here is marked another peculiar quality of this creature, which neither flies, nor runs distinctly, but has a motion composed of both, and, using its wings as sails, makes great speed.

Vasta velut Libyæ venantium vocibus ales
Cum premitur, calidas cursu transmittit arenas,
Inque modum veli sinuatis flamme pennis
Pulverulenta volat

Claud. in Eutr.

How rich the peacock ! what bright glories run
 From plume to plume, and vary in the sun !
 He proudly spreads them to the golden ray,
 Gives all his colours, and adorns the day ;
 With conscious state the spacious round displays,
 And slowly moves amid the waving blaze.

210

Who taught the hawk, to find, in seasons wise,
 Perpetual summer, and a change of skies ?
 When clouds deform the year, she mounts the wind,
 Shoots to the south, nor fears the storm behind ;
 The sun returning, she returns again,
 Lives in his beams, and leaves ill days to men.

215

Tho' strong the hawk, tho' practis'd well to fly,
 An eagle drops her in a lower sky ;
 An eagle, when, deserting human fight,
 She seeks the sun in her unweary'd flight ;
 Did thy command her yellow pinion lift
 So high in air, and seat her on the cliff,
 Where far above thy world she dwells alone,
 And proudly makes the strength of rocks her own ;
 Thence wide o'er nature takes her dread survey,
 And with a glance predestinates her prey ?

220

225

She

She scorns the rider, and pursuing speed.] Xenophon says, Cyrus had horses that could overtake the goat, and the wild-afs ; but none that could reach this creature. A thousand golden ducats, or a hundred camels, was the stated price of a horse that could equal their speed.

How rich the peacock, &c.] Though this bird is but just mentioned in my author, I could not forbear going a little farther, and spreading those beautiful plumes (which are there shut up) into half a dozen lines. The circumstance I have marked of his opening his plumes to the sun is true. "*Expandit colores adverso maxime sole, quia sic fulgentius radiant.*"—Plin. l. x. c. xx.

Tho' strong the hawk, tho' practis'd well to fly.] Thuanus (de Re Accip.) mentions a hawk that flew from Paris to London in a night.

And the Egyptians, in regard to its swiftness, made it their symbol for the wind ; for which reason we may suppose the hawk, as well as the raven above, to have been a bird of note in Egypt.

Thence wide o'er nature takes her dread survey, &c.] The eagle is said to be of so acute a sight, that when she is so high in the air that man cannot see her, she can discern the smallest fish under water. My author accurately understood the nature of the creatures he describes, and seems to have been a naturalist as well as a poet ; which the next note will confirm.

PART OF THE BOOK OF JOB.

265

She feasts her young with blood, and, hov'ring o'er
Th'unslaughter'd host, enjoys the promis'd gore.

230

Know'st thou how many moons, by me assign'd,
Roll o'er the mountain goat, and forest hind,
While pregnant they a mother's load sustain ?
They bend in anguish, and cast forth their pain.

Hale are their young, from human frailties freed ;
Walk unsustain'd, and unassisted feed ;

235

They live at once ; forsake the dam's warm side ;
Take the wide world, with nature for their guide ;
Bound o'er the lawn, or seek the distant glade ;
And find a home in each delightful shade.

240

Will the tall reem, which knows no lord but me,
Low at the crib, and ask an alms of thee ;
Submit his unworn shoulder to the yoke,
Break the stiff clod, and o'er the furrow smoke ?
Since great his strength, go trust him, void of care ;
Lay on his neck the toil of all the year ;
Bid him bring home the seasons to thy doors,
And cast his load among thy gather'd stores.

245

Didst thou from service the wild ass discharge,
And break his bonds, and bid him live at large,
Thro' the wide waste his ample mansion roam,
And lose himself in his unbounded home ?

250

By nature's hand magnificently fed,
His meal is on the range of mountains spread ;
As in pure air aloft he bounds along,
He sees in distant smoke the city throng ;
Conscious of freedom, scorns the smother'd train,
The threat'ning driver, and the servile rein.

255

N

Survey

Know'st thou how many moons, by me assign'd, &c.] The meaning of this question is, Know'st thou the time and circumstances of their bringing forth ? for to know the time only was easy, and had nothing extraordinary in it ; but the circumstances had something peculiarly expressive of God's providence, which makes the question proper in this place. Pliny observes, that the hind with young is by instinct directed to a certain herb called Sefelis, which facilitates the birth. Thunder also (which looks more like the immediate hand of Providence) has the same effect, Ps. xxix. In so early an age to observe these things, may style our author a naturalist.

Survey the warlike horse! didst thou invest
 With thunder, his robust distended chest? 263
 No sense of fear his dauntless soul allays:
 'Tis dreadful to behold his nostrils blaze;
 To paw the vale he proudly takes delight,
 And triumphs in the fulness of his might;
 High-raised he snuffs the battle from afar, 265
 And burns to plunge amid the raging war;
 And mocks at death, and throws his foam around,
 And in a storm of fury shakes the ground.
 How does his firm, his rising heart advance
 Full on the brandish'd sword, and shaken lance; 270
 While his fix'd eye-balls meet the dazzling shield,
 Gaze, and return the lightning of the field!
 He sinks the sense of pain in generous pride,
 Nor feels the shaft that trembles in his side;
 But neighs to the shrill trumpet's dreadful blast 275
 Till death; and when he groans, he groans his last.
 But, fiercer still, the lordly lion stalks,
 Grimly majestic in his lonely walks;
 When round he glares, all living creatures fly;
 He clears the desert with his rolling eye. 280
 Say, mortal, does he rouse at thy command,
 And roar to thee, and live upon thy hand?
 Dost thou for him in forests bend thy bow,
 And to his gloomy den the morsel throw,
 Where bent on death lie hid his tawny brood 285
 And, couch'd in dreadful ambush, pant for blood;
 Or, stretch'd on broken limbs, consume the day,
 In darkness wrapt, and slumber o'er their prey?
 By the pale moon they take their destin'd round,
 And lash their sides, and furious tear the ground. 290
 By

Survey the warlike horse! &c.] The description of the horse is the most celebrated of any in the poem. There is an excellent critique on it in the *Guardians*. I shall therefore only observe, that, in this description, as in other parts of this speech, our vulgar translation has much more spirit than the Septuagint; it always takes the original in the most poetical and exalted sense, so that most commentators, even on the Hebrew itself, fall beneath it.

By the pale moon they take their destin'd round, &c.] Pursuing their prey by night is true of most wild beasts, particularly the lion,

Pf.

Now shrieks, and dying groans the desert fill;
 They rage, they rend, their ravenous jaws distil
 With crimson foam, and, when the banquet's o'er,
 They stride away and paint their steps with gore;
 In flight alone the shepherd puts his trust, 295
 And shudders at the talon in the dust.

Mild is my Behemoth †, tho' large his frame;
 Smooth is his temper, and repress his flame,
 While unprovok'd. This native of the flood
 Lifts his broad foot, and puts ashore for food; 300
 Earth sinks beneath him as he moves along
 To seek the herbs, and mingle with the throng.
 See, with what strength his harden'd loins are bound,
 All over proof, and shut against a wound!
 How like a mountain cedar moves his tail! 305
 Nor can his complicated sinews fail.
 Built high and wide, his solid bones surpass
 The bars of steel; his ribs are ribs of brass;
 His port majestic, and his armed jaw,
 Give the wide forest, and the mountain, law. 310
 The mountains feed him; there the beasts admire
 The mighty stranger, and in dread retire:
 At length his greatness nearer they survey,
 Graze in his shadow, and his eye obey.
 The fens and marshes are his cool retreat, 315
 His noontide shelter from the burning heat;
 Their sedgy bosoms his wide couch are made,
 And groves of willows give him all their shade.
 His eye drinks Jordan up, when, fir'd with drought,
 He trusts to turn its current down his throat; 320
 In lessen'd waves it creeps along the plain:
 He sinks a river, and he thirsts again.

N 2

Go

Pf. civ. v. 20. The Arabians have one among their five hundred names for the lion, which signifies "the hunter by moonshine."

† The river horse.

He sinks a river, and he thirsts again, &c.

Cepbisi glaciale caput, quo suctus anbelam

Ferre sitim Pytbon, amnemque avertere ponto.

Stat. Theb. v. 349.

Qui spiris tegetet montes, bauriret biatu

Flumina, &c.

Claud. Præf. in Ruf.

Let

Go to the Nile, and, from its fruitful side,
 Cast forth thy line into the swelling tide;
 With slender hair Leviathan command,
 And stretch his vastness on the loaded strand. 325
 Will he become thy servant? Will he own
 Thy lordly nod, and tremble at thy frown?
 Or with his sport amuse thy leisure day,
 And, bound in silk, with thy soft maiden's play? 330
 Shall pompous banquets swell with such a prize,
 And the bowl journey round his ample size?
 Or the debating merchants share the prey,
 And various limbs to various marts convey?
 Thro' his firm skull what steel its way can win 335
 What forceful engine can subdue his skin?
 Fly far, and live; tempt not his matchless might;
 The bravest shrink to cowards in his sight;
 The rashest dare not rouse him up: who then
 Shall turn on me, among the sons of men? 340
 Am I a debtor? Hast thou ever heard
 Whence come the gifts which are on me conferr'd?
 My lavish fruit a thousand valleys fills,
 And mine the herds that graze a thousand hills:
 Earth, sea, and air, all nature is my own: 345
 And stars and sun are dust beneath my throne.
 And dar'st thou with the world's great Father vye,
 Thou who dost tremble at my creature's eye?
 At full my huge Leviathan shall rise,
 Boast all his strength, and spread his wondrous size 350
 Who, great in arms, e'er stripp'd his shining mail,
 Or crown'd his triumph with a single scale!

Who

Let not then this hyperbole seem too much for an eastern poet, though some commentators of name, strain hard in this place for a new construction, through fear of it.

Go to the Nile, and from its fruitful side, &c.] The taking the crocodile is most difficult. Diodorus says, they are not to be taken but by iron nets. When Augustus conquered Egypt, he struck a medal, the impress of which was a crocodile chained to a palm tree, with this inscription—"Nemo antea religavit."

The rashest dare not rouse him up, &c.] This alludes to a custom of this creature, which is, when fated with fish, to come ashore, and sleep among the reeds.

Whose heart sustains him to draw near! Behold,
 Destruction yawns; his spacious jaws unfold,
 And, marshall'd round the wide expanse, disclose 355
 Teeth edg'd with death, and crowding rows on rows:
 What hideous fangs on either side arise!
 And what a deep abyss between them lies!
 Meet with thy lance, and with thy plummet sound,
 The one how long, the other how profound. 360

His bulk is charg'd with such a furious soul,
 That clouds of smoke from his spread nostrils roll,
 As from a furnace; and when rous'd his ire,
 Fate issues from his jaws in streams of fire.
 The rage of tempests, and the roar of seas, 365
 Thy terror, this thy great Superior please;
 Strength on his ample shoulder sits in state;
 His well-join'd limbs are dreadfully complete;
 His flakes of solid flesh are slow to part;
 As steel his nerves, as adamant his heart. 370

When, late awak'd, he rears him from the floods,
 And, stretching forth his stature to the clouds,
 Writhes in the sun aloft his scaly height,
 And strikes the distant hills with transient light,
 Far round are fatal damps of terror spread, 375
 The mighty fear, nor blush to own their dread

N 3

Large

Behold,
Destruction yawns, his spacious jaws unfold, &c.] The crocodile's
 mouth is exceeding wide. When he gapes, says Pliny, "Fit totum
 os." Martial says to his old woman,

*Cum comparata victibus tuis ora
 Niliacus habet crocodilus agusta.*

So that the expression here is barely just.

Fate issues from his jaws in streams of fire, &c.] This too is nearer
 truth than at first view may be imagined. The crocodile, say the natura-
 lists, lying long under water, and being then forced to hold its breadth,
 when it emerges, the breath long repress'd is hot, and bursts out so
 violently, that it resembles fire and smoke. The horse suppresses
 not his breath by any means so long, neither is he so fierce and ani-
 mated; yet the most correct of poets ventures to use the same meta-
 phor concerning him

Collectumque premens volvit sub naribus ignem.

By this and the foregoing note, I would caution against a false opinion
 of the eastern boldness, from passages in them ill understood.

Large is his front ; and when his burnish'd eyes
Lift their broad lids, the morning seems to rise.

In vain may death in various shapes invade,
The swift-wing'd arrow, the descending blade ;
His naked breast their impotence defies ;

380

The dart rebounds, the brittle faulchion flies.

Shut in himself, the war without he hears,

Safe in the tempest of their rattling spears ;

The cumber'd strand their wasted volleys strow ;

385

His sport, the rage and labour of the foe.

His pastimes like a cauldron boil the flood,

And blacken ocean with the rising mud :

The billows feel him as he works his way ;

His hoary footsteps shine along the sea ;

390

The foam high-wrought, with white, divides the green,

And distant sailors point where death has been.

His like, earth bears not on her spacious face ;

Alone in nature stands his dauntless race,

For utter ignorance of fear renown'd.

395

In wrath he rolls his baleful eyes around ;

Makes

Large in his front, and, when his burnish'd eyes, &c.] "His eyes are like the eyelids of the morning." I think this gives us as great an image of the thing it would express, as can enter the thought of man. It is not improbable, that the Egyptians stole their hieroglyphic for the morning, which is the crocodile's eye, from this passage, though no commentator I have seen mentions it. It is easy to conceive how the Egyptians should be both readers and admirers of the writings of Moses; whom I suppose the author of this poem.

I have observed already, that three or four of the creatures here described are Egyptian; the two last are notoriously so; they are the river-horse and the crocodile, those celebrated inhabitants of the Nile; and on those two it is that our author chiefly dwells. It would have been expected, from an author more remote from that river than Moses, in a catalogue of creatures produced to magnify their Creator, to have dwelt on the two largest works of his hand, viz. the elephant and the whale: this is so natural an expectation, that some commentators have rendered Behemoth and Leviathan, the elephant and the whale, though the descriptions in our author will not admit of it; but Moses being (as we may well suppose) under an immediate terror of the Hippopotamos and Crocodile, from their daily mischiefs and ravages around him, it is very accountable why he should permit them to take place.

Makes ev'ry swol'n, disdainful heart, subside,
And holds dominion o'er the sons of pride.

Then the Chaldaean eas'd his lab'ring breast,
With full conviction of his crime oppress'd.

400

"Thou canst accomplish all things, Lord of might!

"And every thought is naked to thy sight.

"But oh! Thy ways are wonderful, and lie

"Beyond the deepest reach of mortal eye.

"Oft have I heard of thine Almighty pow'r.

405

"But never saw thee till this dreadful hour.

"O'erwhelm'd with shame, the Lord of life I see;

"Abhor myself, and give my soul to thee.

"Nor shall my weakness tempt thine anger more;

"Man was not made to *question* but *adore*.

410

End of the Paraphrase.

THE LAST DAY,
A POEM.
IN THREE BOOKS.

BOOK I.

WHILE others sing the fortune of the great,
Empire and arms, and all the pomp of state,
With Briton's hero† set their souls on fire,
And grow immortal as his deeds inspire,
I draw a deeper scene! a scene that yields 5
A louder trumpet, and more dreadful fields;
The world alarm'd, both earth and heav'n o'erthrown,
And gasping nature's last tremendous groan;
Death's ancient sceptre broke, the teeming tomb,
The righteous Judge, and man's eternal doom. 10
'Twixt joy and pain I view the bold design,
And ask my anxious heart if it be mine.
Whatever great or dreadful has been done
Within the sight of conscious stars or sun,
Is far beneath my daring. I look down 15
On all the splendors of the British crown.
This globe is for my verse a narrow bound;
Attend me all ye glorious worlds around!
O! all ye angels, howfoe'er disjoin'd,
Of every various order, place, and kind, 20
Hear, and assist, a feeble mortal's lays;
'Tis your eternal King I strive to praise.
But chiefly thou, great Ruler! Lord of all!
Before whose throne archangels prostrate fall, 25

If

† The Duke of Marlborough.

If at thy nod, from discord, and from night,
 Sprang beauty, and yon sparkling worlds of light,
 Exalt ev'n me; all inward tumults quell;
 The clouds and darkness of my mind dispel;
 To my great subject thou my breast inspire,
 And raise my lab'ring soul with equal fire.

25

30

Man! bear thy brow aloft, view ev'ry grace
 In God's great offspring, beauteous nature's face;
 See spring's gay bloom, see golden autumn's store;
 See how earth smiles, and hear old ocean roar.
 Leviathans but heave their cumbrous mail,
 It makes a tide, and wind-bound natives sail.
 Here forests rise, the mountain's awful pride;
 Here rivers measure climes, and worlds divide;
 There vallies, fraught with gold's resplendent seeds,
 Hold kings and kingdoms fortunes in their beds:
 There to the skies aspiring hills ascend,
 And into distant lands their shades extend.
 View cities, armies, fleets; of fleets the pride,
 See Europe's law in Albion's channel ride;
 View the whole earth's vast landscape unconfin'd,
 Or view in Britain all her glories join'd.

35

40

45

Then let the firmament thy wonder raise;
 'Twill raise thy wonder, but transcend thy praise.
 How far from east to west? the lab'ring eye
 Can scarce the distant azure bounds descry:
 Wide theatre! where tempests play at large,
 And God's right hand can all its wrath discharge.
 Mark how those radiant lamps inflame the pole,
 Call forth the seasons, and the year controul:
 They shine thro' time with an unalter'd ray,
 See this grand period rise, and that decay:
 So vast, this world's a grain; yet myriad's grace,
 With golden pomp, the throng'd ethereal space;
 So bright, with such a wealth of glory stor'd,
 'Twere sin in heathens not to have ador'd.

50

55

60

How great, how firm, how sacred all appears!
 How worthy an immortal round of years!
 Yet all must drop, as autumn's sickliest grain,
 And earth and firmament be sought in vain;

The track forgot where constellations shone, 65
 Or where the Stuarts fill'd an awful throne :
 Time shall be slain, all nature be destroy'd,
 Nor leave an atom in the mighty void.
 Sooner or later, in some future date
 (A dreadful secret in the book of fate!) 70
 This hour, for aught all human wisdom knows,
 Or when ten thousand harvests more have rose ;
 When scenes are chang'd on this revolving earth,
 Old empires fall, and give new empires birth ;
 While other Bourbons rule in other lands, 75
 And (if man's sin forbids not) other Annes ;
 While the still busy world is treading o'er
 The paths they trod five thousand years before,
 Thoughtless as those who now life's mazes run,
 Of earth dissolv'd, or an extinguish'd sun ; 80
 (Ye sublunary worlds ! awake, awake ?
 Ye rulers of the nations ? hear, and shake !)
 Thick clouds of darkness shall arise on day,
 In sudden night all earth's dominions lay ;
 Impetuous winds the scatter'd forests rend, 85
 Eternal mountains, like their cedars, bend ;
 The vallies yawn, the troubled ocean roar,
 And break the bondage of his wonted shore ;
 A sanguine stain the silver moon o'erspread,
 Darkness the circle of the sun invade ; 90
 From inmost heav'n incessant thunders roll,
 And the strong echo bound from poll to poll.
 When, lo ; a mighty trump, one half conceal'd
 In clouds, one half to mortal eye reveal'd,
 Shall pour a dreadful note ; the piercing call 95
 Shall rattle in the centre of the ball ;
 Th' extended circuit of creation shake ;
 The living die with fear, the dead awake.
 Oh powerful blast ! to which no equal sound
 Did e'er the frightened ear of nature wound, 100
 Tho' rival clarions have been strain'd on high,
 And kindled wars immortal thro' the sky,
 Tho' God's whole enginery, discharg'd, and all
 The rebel angels bellow'd in their fall.

Have

THE LAST DAY.

275

Have angels sinn'd ! and shall not man beware ! 105

How shall a son of earth decline the snare ?

Not folded arms, and slackness of the mind,

Can promise for the safety of mankind.

None are supinely good ; thro' care and pain,

And various arts, the steep ascent we gain. 110

This is the scene of combat, not of rest ;

Man's is laborious happiness at best ;

On this side death his dangers never cease ;

His joys are joys of conquest, not of peace ;

If then obsequious to the will of fate, 115

And bending to the terms of human state,

When guilty joys invite us to their arms,

When beauty smiles, or grandeur spreads her charms,

The conscious soul would this great scene display,

Call down th' immortal hosts in dread array, 120

The trumpet sound, the christian banner spread,

And raise from silent graves the trembling dead ;

Such deep impression would the picture make,

No pow'r on earth her firm resolve could shake,

Engag'd with angels she would greatly stand, 125

And look regardless down on sea and land ;

Not proffer'd worlds her ardour could restrain,

And death might shake his threat'ning lance in vain !

Her certain conquest would endear the fight,

And danger serve but to exalt delight. 130

Instructed thus to shun the fatal spring,

Whence flow the terrors of that day I sing,

More boldly we our labours may pursue,

And all the dreadful image set to view.

The sparkling eye, the sleek and painted breast, 135

The burnish'd scale, curl'd train, and rising crest,

All that is lovely in the noxious snake,

Provokes our fear, and bids us fly the brake ;

The sting once drawn, his guiltless beauties rise

In pleasing lusture, and detain our eyes ; 140

We view with joy what once did horror move,

And strong aversion softens into love.

Say then, my muse ! whom dismal scenes delight,

Frequent at tombs, and in the realms of night ;

Say, melancholy maid ! if bold to dare 145
 The last extremes of terror, and despair,
 Oh say what change on earth, what heart in man,
 This blackest moment since the world began.

Ah mournful turn ! the blissful earth, who late
 At leisure on her axle roll'd in state, 150
 While thousand golden planets knew no rest,
 Still onward in their circling journey prest :
 A grateful change of seasons some to bring,
 And sweet vicissitude of fall and spring ;
 Some thro' vast oceans to conduct the keel, 155
 And some those wat'ry worlds to sink or swell :
 Around her some their splendors to display,
 And gild her globe with tributary day :
 This world so great, of joy the bright abode,
 Heav'n's darling child, and fav'rite of her God, 160
 Now looks an exile from her father's care,
 Deliver'd o'er to darkness and despair.

No sun in radiant glory shines on high,
 No light but from the terrors of the sky :
 Fall'n are her mountains, her fam'd rivers lost, 165
 And all into a second chaos tost :
 One universal ruin spreads abroad :
 Nothing is safe beneath the throne of God.

Such, earth ! thy fate : what then canst thou afford
 To comfort and support thy guilty lord ? 170
 Man, haughty lord of a' beneath the moon,
 How must he bend his soul's ambition down ?
 Prostrate, the reptile own, and disavow
 His boasted stature, and assuming brow ?
 Claim kindred with the clay, and curse his form, 175
 That speaks distinction from his sister worm ?
 What dreadful pangs the trembling heart invade ?
 Lord, why dost thou forsake whom thou hast made ?
 Who can sustain thy anger ? who can stand
 Beneath the terrors of thy lifted hand ? 180

It flies the reach of thought : Oh, save me, pow'r
 Of pow'r's supreme, in that tremendous hour !
 Thou who beneath the frown of fate hast stood,
 And in thy dreadful agony sweat blood ;

Thou

THE LAST DAY.

277

Thou, who for me, thro' every throbbing vein,
Hast felt the keenest edge of mortal pain;
Whom death lead captive thro' the realms below,
And taught those horrid mysteries of woe!
Defend me, O my God! O save me pow'r
Of powers supreme in that tremendous hour!

185

190

From east to west they fly, from pole to line,
Imploring shelter from the wrath divine;
Beg flames to wrap or welming seas to sweep,
Or rocks to yawn, compassionately deep;
Seas cast the monster forth to meet his doom,
And rocks but priton up for wrath to come.

195

So fares a traitor to an earthly crown,
While death sits threat'ning in his prince's frown.
His heart's dismay'd; and now his fears command
To change his native for a distant land:
Swift orders fly, the king's severe decree
Stands in the channel, and looks up the sea;
The port he seeks, obedient to her lord,
Hurls back the rebel to his lifted sword,

200

But why this idle toil to paint that day?
This time e'aborately thrown away?
Words all in vain pant after the distress,
The height of eloquence would make it less.
Heav'ns! how the the good man trembles!—

205

And is there a Last Day? and must there come
A sure, a fix'd, inexorable doom?

210

Ambition! swell, and thy proud sails to show,
Take all the winds that vanity can blow!
Wealth! on a golden mountain blazing stand.
And reach an Indian forth in either hand;
Spread all thy purple clusters, tempting vine!
And thou, more dreadful foe, bright beauty, shine;
Shine all, in all your charms together rise.
That all, in all your charms, I may despise,
While I mount upward on a strong desire,
Borne, like Elijah, in a car of fire.

215

220

In hopes of glory to be quite involv'd!
To smile at death! to long to be dissolv'd!

From

From our decays a pleasure to receive !
 And kindle into transport at a grave ! 225
 What equals this ? And shall the victor now
 Boast the proud laurels on his loaded brow ?
 Religion ! oh thou cherub, heaven'ly bright !
 Oh joys unmix'd, and fathomless delight !
 Thou, thou art all ! nor find I in the whole 230
 Creation aught but God and my own soul.
 For ever, then, my soul ! thy God adore,
 Nor let the brute creation praise him more.
 Shall things inanimate my conduct blame,
 And flush my conscious cheek with spreading shame ? 235
 They all for him pursue, or quit their end ;
 The mountain flames their burning power suspend ;
 In solid heaps th' unfrozen billows stand,
 To rest and silence aw'd by his command :
 Nay, the dire monsters that infest the flood, 240
 By nature dreadful, and athirst for blood,
 His will can calm, their savage tempers bind,
 And turn to mild protectors of mankind.
 Did not the prophet this great truth maintain
 In the deep chambers of the gloomy main, 245
 When darkness round him all her horrors spread,
 And the loud ocean bellow'd o'er his head ?
 When now the thunder roars, the lightning flies,
 And all the warring winds tumultuous rise ;
 When now the foaming surges, tols'd on high, 250
 Disclose the sands beneath, and touch the sky ;
 When death draws near, the mariner's aghast,
 Look back with terror on their actions past ;
 Their courage sickens into deep dismay,
 Their hearts, thro' fear and anguish, melt away : 255
 Nor tears, nor pray'rs, the tempest can appease ;
 Now they devote their treasure to the seas ;
 Unload their shatter'd bark, tho' richly fraught,
 And think the hopes of life are cheaply bought
 With gems and gold ; but, oh, the storm so high ! 260
 Nor gems nor gold the hopes of life can buy.
 The trembling prophet then, themselves to save,
 They headlong plunge into the briny wave ;

Down

THE LAST DAY.

279

Down he descends, and, booming o'er his head,
The billows close; he's number'd with the dead.

265

Hear, O ye just! attend ye virtuous few!

And the bright paths of piety pursue)

Lo! the great Ruler of the world, from high,

Looks smiling down with a propitious eye,

Covers his servant with his gracious hand,

270

And bids tempestuous nature silent stand;

Commands the peaceful waters to give place,

Or kindly fold him in a soft embrace;

He bridles in the monsters of the deep;

The bridled monsters awful distance keep;

275

Forget their hunger while they view their prey,

And guiltless gaze, and round the stranger play.

But still arise new wonders; nature's Lord

Sends forth into the deep his pow'rful word,

And calls the great Leviathan; the great

280

Leviathan attends in all his state,

Exults for joy, and, with a mighty bound,

Makes the sea shake, and heav'n and earth resound;

Blackens the waters with the rising sand,

And drives vast billows to the distant land.

285

As yawns an earthquake, when imprison'd air

Struggles for vent, and lays the centre bare,

The whale expands his jaws enormous size,

The prophet views the cavern with surprise,

Measures his monstrous teeth, afar descry'd,

290

And rolls his wond'ring eyes from side to side;

Then takes possession of the spacious seat,

And sails secure within the dark retreat.

Now is he pleas'd the northern blast to hear,

And hangs on liquid mountains, void of fear;

295

Or falls immers'd into the depths below,

Where the dead silent waters never flow;

To the foundations of the hills convey'd,

Dwells in the shelving mountain's dreadful shade;

Where plummet never reach'd he draws his breath,

300

And glides serenely through the paths of death.

Two wondrous days and nights thro' coral groves,

Thro' labyrinths of rocks and sands, he roves;

When

When the third morning, with its revel rays,
The mountains gilds, and on the billows plays ;
It sees the king of waters rise, and pour
His sacred guest uninjur'd on the shore :
A type of that great blessing which the muse
In her next labour ardently pursues.

305

309

End of the First Book.

THE LAST DAY.

BOOK II.

NOW man awakes, and from his silent bed,
Where he has slept for ages, lifts his head;
Shakes off the slumber of ten thousand years,
And on the borders of new worlds appears.
Whate'er the bold, the rash, adventure cost,
In wide eternity I dare be lost.

5

The muse is wont in narrow bounds to sing,
To teach the swain, or celebrate the king.
I grasp the whole, no more to parts confin'd
I lift my voice and sing to human kind:
I sing to men and angels; angels join,
While such the theme, their sacred songs with mine.

10

Again the trumpet's intermitted sound
Roll the wide circuit of creation round,
An universal concourse to prepare
Of all that ever breath'd the vital air:
In some wide field, which active whirlwinds sweep,
Drive cities, forests, mountains, to the deep;
To smooth and lengthen out th' unbounded space,
And spread an area for all human race.

15

20

Now monuments prove faithful to their trust,
And render back their long committed dust.
Now charnels rattle; scatter'd limbs, and all
The various bones, obsequious to the call,
Self-mov'd, advance; the neck perhaps to meet
The distant head; the distant legs the feet.
Dreadful to view, see thro' the dusky sky
Fragments of bodies in confusion fly,
To distant regions journeying there to claim
Deserted members, and complete the frame.

25

30
When

When the world bow'd to Rome's almighty sword,
Rome bow'd to Pompey, and confess'd her lord.

Yet one day lost, this deity below

Became the scorn and pity of his foe.

His blood a traitor's sacrifice was made,

35

And smok'd indignant on a ruffian's blade.

No trumpet's sound, no grasping army's yell,

Bid, with due horror, his great soul farewell.

Obscure his fall! all welt'ring in his gore,

His trunk was cast to perish on the shore!

40

While Julius frown'd the bloody monster dead,

Who bought the world in his great rival's head.

This sever'd head and trunk shall join once more,

Tho' realms, now rise between, and oceans roar:

The trumpet's sound each fragment mote shall hear,

45

Or fix'd in earth, or if afloat in air,

Obey the signal wafted in the wind,

And not one sleeping atom lag behind.

So swarming bees, that on a summer's day

In airy rings, and wild meanders play,

50

Charm'd with the brazen sound, their wand'rings end,

And, gently circling, on a bough descend.

The body thus renew'd, the conscious soul,

Which has perhaps been flutt'ring near the pole;

Or 'midst the burning planets wond'ring stray'd,

55

Or hover'd o'er where her pale corpse was laid;

Or rather coasted on her final state,

And fear'd, or wish'd for, her appointed fate:

This soul, returning with a constant flame,

Now weds for ever her immortal frame.

60

Life, which ran down before, so high is wound,

The springs maintain an everlasting round.

Thus, a frail model of the work design'd

First takes a copy of the builder's mind,

Before the structure firm with lasting oak,

65

And marble bowels of the solid rock,

Turns the strong arch, and bids the columns rise,

And bear the lofty palace to the skies;

The wrongs of time enabled to surpass,

With bars of adamant, and ribs of brass.

70

That

THE LAST DAY.

283

That ancient, sacred, and illustrious * dome,
Where soon or late fair Albion's heroes come,
From camps, and courts, tho' great, or wise, or just;
To feed the worm, and moulder into dust;
That solemn mansion of the royal dead,
Where passing slaves o'er sleeping monarchs tread,
Now populous o'erflows: a numerous race
Of rising kings fill all th' extended space:
A life well spent, not the victorious sword,
Awards the crown, and stiles the greater lord.

75

80

Nor monuments alone, and burial earth,
Labours with man to this his second birth;
But where gay palaces in pomp arise,
And gilded theatres invade the skies;
Nations shall wake, whose unrespected bones
Support the pride of their luxurious sons.
The most magnificent and costly dome
Is but an upper chamber to a tomb.

85

No spot on earth but has supply'd a grave,
And human skulls the spacious ocean pave.
All's full of man; and at this dreadful turn,
The swarms shall issue, and the hive shall burn.

90

Not all at once, nor in like manner, rise:
Some lift with pain their slow unwilling eyes,
Shrink backward from the terror of the light,
And bless the grave, and call for lasting night.

95

Others, whose long attempted virtue stood
Fix'd as a rock, and broke the rushing flood;
Whose firm resolve, nor beauty could melt down,
Nor raging tyrants from their posture frown;
Such in this day of horrors, shall be seen
To face the thunders with a godlike mein;
The planets drop, their thoughts are fix'd above;
The centre shakes; their hearts disdain to move:
An earth dissolving, and a heav'n thrown wide;
A yawning gulph, and fiends on every side;
Serene they view, impatient of delay,
And bless the dawn of everlasting day.

100

105

Here

* Westminster Abbey.

Here greatness prostrate falls ; there, strength gives place ;
 Here lazars smile ; there, beauty hides her face. 110
 Christians, and Jews, and Turks, and Pagans stand,
 A blend'ed throng, one undistinguish'd band.
 Some who, perhaps, by mutual wounds expir'd,
 With zeal for their distinct persuasions fir'd,
 In mutual friendship their long slumber break, 115
 And hand in hand their Saviour's love partake.

But none are flush'd with brighter joy, or warm
 With juster confidence, enjoy the storm,
 Than those, whose pious bounties, unconfin'd,
 Have made them public fathers of mankind. 120
 In that illustrious rank, what shining light
 With such distinguish'd glory fills my sight ?
 Bend down, my grateful muse, that homage show,
 Which to such worthies thou art proud to owe.
 Whickham ! Fox ! Chichley !* hail, illustrious names ! 125
 Who to far distant times dispense your beams ;
 Beneath your shades, and near your chrystal springs,
 I first presum'd to touch the trembling strings.
 All hail, thrice honour'd ! 'Twas your great renown
 To bless a people, and oblige a crown. 130
 And now you rise eternally to shine,
 Eternally to drink the rays divine.

Indulgent God ! oh how shall mortal raise
 His soul to due returns of grateful praise,
 For bounty so profuse to human kind, 135
 Thy wond'rous gifts of an eternal mind ?
 Shall I, who, some few years ago, was less
 Than worm, or mite, or shadow can express,
 Was nothing ; shall I live, when ev'ry fire
 And every star shall languish and expire ? 140
 When earth's no more, shall I survive above,
 And thro' the radiant files of angels move ?
 Or, as before the throne of God I stand,
 See new worlds rolling from his spacious hand ;
 Where our adventures shall perhaps be taught, 145
 As we now tell how Michael fung or fought

All

* Founders of New College, Corpus Christi, and All Souls, in Oxford ; of all which the author was a member.

THE LAST DAY.

285

All that has being in full concert join,
And celebrate the depths of love divine!

But oh! before this blissful state, before
Th' aspiring soul this wondrous height can soar,
The Judge, descending, thunders from afar,
And all mankind is summon'd to the bar.

150

This mighty scene I next presume to draw;
Attend great Anna with religious awe.
Expect not here the known successful arts
To win attention, and command our hearts.

155

Fiction, be far away; let no machine
Descending here, no fabled god be seen;
Behold the God of gods indeed descend,
And worlds unnumber'd his approach attend!

160

Lo! the wide theatre, whose ample space
Must entertain the whole of human race,
At heav'n's all pow'rful edict is prepar'd,
And fenc'd around with an immortal guard.

Tribes, provinces, dominions, worlds, o'erflow
The mighty plain, and deluge all below:

165

And ev'ry age, and nation, pours along;
Nimrod and Bourbon mingle in the throng;
Adam salutes his youngest son; no sign
Of all those ages, which their births disjoin.

170

How empty learning, and how vain is art,
But as it mends the life, and guides the heart!
What volumes have been swell'd, what time been spent,
To fix a hero's birth-day, or descent?

What joy must it now yield, what rapture raise,
To see the glorious race of ancient days?

175

To greet those worthies, who perhaps have stood
Illustrious on record before the flood?

Alas! a nearer care your soul demands,
Cæsar unnoted in your presence stands.

180

How vast the concourse! not in number more
The waves that break on the resounding shore;
The leaves that tremble in the shady grove
The lamps that gild the spangled vaults above:

Those overwhelming armies, whose command
Said to one empire, Fall; another, Stand;

185

Whose

Whose rear lay wrapt in night; while breaking dawn
 Rous'd the broad front, and call'd the battle on;
 Great Xerxes' world in arms; proud Cannæ's field;
 Where Carthage taught victorious Rome to yield: 190
 (Another blow had broke the fates decree,
 And earth had wanted her fourth monarchy)
 Immortal Blenheim; fam'd Ramillia's host;
 They all are here, and here they all are lost:
 There millions swell to be discern'd in vain, 195
 Lost as a billow in the unbounded main.

This echoing voice now rends the yielding air,
 "For judgment, judgment, sons of men! prepare!"
 Earth shakes anew, I hear her groans profound;
 And hell thro' all her trembling realms resound. 200

Whoe'er thou art, thou greatest pow'r of earth,
 Bless'd with most equal planets at thy birth,
 Whose valour drew the most successful sword,
 Most realms united in one common lord,
 Who on the day of triumph, saidst, Be thine 205
 The skies, Jehovah; all this world is mine:
 Dare not to lift thine eyes,—Alas, my muse!
 How art thou lost? What numbers canst thou chuse?

A sudden blush informs the wav'ring sky,
 And now the crimson curtains open fly; 210
 Lo! far within, and far above all height,
 Where heav'n's great Sovereign reigns in worlds of light;
 Whence nature he informs, and with one ray,
 Shot from his eye, does all her works survey;
 Creates, supports, confounds! where time, and place, 215
 Matter, and form, and fortune, life, and grace,
 Wait humbly at the footstool of their God,
 And move obedient at his awful nod;
 Whence he beholds us vagrant emmets crawl
 At random on this air-suspended ball; 220
 (Speak of creation) if he pour one breath,
 The bubble breaks, and 'tis eternal death.

Thence issuing I behold but mortal sight
 Sustains not such a rushing sea of light)
 I see, on an empyreal flying throne, 225
 Sublimely rais'd, Heav'n's everlasting Son,

Crown'd

THE LAST DAY.

287

Crown'd with that majesty which form'd the world,
And the grand rebel flaming downward hurl'd.
Virtue, dominion, praise, omnipotence,
Support the train of their triumphant Prince. 230

A zone, beyond the thought of angels bright,
Around him, like the zodiac, winds its light.
Night shades the solemn arches of his brows,
And in his cheek the purple morning glows.
Where'er serene, he turns propitious eyes, 235
Or we expect, or find a paradise;

But if resentment reddens their mild beams,
The Eden kindles, and the world's in flames.
On one hand knowledge shines in purest light;
On one, the sword of justice, fiercely bright. 240
Now bend the knee in sport, present the reed;
Now tell the scourg'd imposture he shall bleed!

Thus glorious thro' the courts of heav'n the source
Of life and death eternal bends his course;
Loud thunders round him roll, and lightnings play; 245
Th' angelic host is rang'd in bright array:
Some touch the string, some strike the sounding shell,
And mingling voices in rich concert swell;
Voices saraphic; blest'd with such a strain,
Could Satan hear, he were a god again. 250

Triumphant King of glory! Soul of bliss!
What a stupendous turn of fate is this?
O! whether art thou rais'd above the scorn
And indigence of him in Bethle'm born;
A needl's, helpless unaccounted guest, 255
And but a second to the fodder'd beast?

How chang'd from him who, meekly prostrate laid,
Vouchsaf'd to wash the feet himself had made!
From him who was betray'd, forlook, deny'd,
Wept, languish'd, pray'd, bled, thirsted, groan'd, and dy'd:
Hung pierc'd and bare, insulted by the foe, 261
All heav'n in tears above, earth unconcern'd below?

And was't enough to bid the son retire?
Why did not nature at thy groan expire?
I see, I hear, I feel, the pangs divine; 265
The world is vanish'd,—I am wholly thine.

Mistaken

Mistaken Caiaphas ! ah ! which blasphem'd,
 Thou or thy pris'ner ? Which shall be condemn'd ?
 Well might'st thou rend thy garments, well exclaim,
 Deep are the horrors of eternal flame ! 270
 But God is good ! 'Tis wondrous all ! ev'n he
 Thou gav'st to death, shame, torture, dy'd for thee.

Now the descending triumph stops its flight,
 From earth full twice a planetary height :
 There all the clouds condens'd, two columns raise, 275
 Distinct with orient veins and golden blaze ;
 One fix'd on earth, and one in sea, and round
 Its ample foot the swelling billows sound.
 These an immeasurable arch support,
 The grand tribunal of this awful court : 280
 Sheets of bright azure, from the purest sky,
 Stream from the crystal arch, and round the columns fly.
 Death, wrapt in chains, low at the basis lies,
 And on the point of his own arrow dies.

Here high enthron'd th' eternal Judge is plac'd, 285
 With all the grandeur of his Godhead grac'd ;
 Stars on his robes in beauteous order meet,
 And the sun burns beneath his awful feet.

Now an archangel, eminently bright,
 From off his silver staff, of wondrous height, 290
 Unfurls the christian flag, which waving flies,
 And shuts and opens more than half the skies :
 The cross so strong a red, it sheds a stain
 Where'er it floats, on earth, and air, and main ;
 Flushes the hill, and sets on fire the wood, 295
 And turns the deep dy'd ocean into blood.

Oh formidable glory ; dreadful bright !
 Refulgent torture to the guilty sight.
 Ah turn, unwary muse ! nor dare reveal
 What horrid thoughts with the polluted dwell. 300
 Say not, (to make the sun shrink in his beam)
 Dare not affirm, they wish it all a dream ;
 Wish or their souls may with their limbs decay,
 Or God be spoil'd of his eternal sway :
 But rather, if thou know'st the means, unfold 305
 How they with transport might the scene behold.

Ah

Ah how ! but by repentance, by a mind
 Quick, and severe, its own offence to find !
 By tears and groans, and never ceasing care,
 And all the pious violence of pray'r ?
 Thus then, with fervency, till now unknown,
 I cast my heart before th' eternal throne ;
 In this great temple, which the skies surround,
 For homage to its Lord, a narrow bound.

310

" O Thou ! whose balance does the mountains weigh, 315

" Whose will the wild tumultuous seas obey,

" Whose breath can turn those wat'ry worlds to flame,

" That flame to tempest, and that tempest tame ;

" Earth's meanest son, all trembling, prostrate falls,

" And on the boundless of thy goodness calls.

320

" Oh ! give the winds all past offence to sweep,

" To scatter wide, or bury in the deep ;

" Thy pow'r, my weakness, may I ever see,

" And wholly dedicate my soul to thee :

" Reign o'er my will ; my passions ebb and flow

325

" At thy command, nor human motive know !

" If anger boil, let anger be my praise,

" And sin the graceful indignation raise :

" My love be warm to succour the distress'd,

" And lift the burden from the soul oppress'd.

330

" Oh may my understanding ever read

" This glorious volume which thy wisdom made !

" Who decks the maiden spring with flow'ry pride ;

" Who calls forth summer, like a sparkling bride ?

" Who joys the mother autumn's bed to crown ?

335

" And bids old winter lay her honours down ?

" Not the great Ottoman, or greater Czar,

" Not Europe's arbitress of peace and war.

" May sea, and land, and earth, and heav'n be join'd,

" To bring th' eternal Author to my mind !

340

" When oceans roar, or awful thunders roll,

" May thoughts of thy dread vengeance shake my soul ;

" When earth's in bloom, or planets proudly shine,

" Adore, my heart ! the Majesty divine.

O

" Thro'

- " Thro' ev'ry scence of life, or peace, or war, 345
 " Plenty, or want, thy glory be my care !
 " Thine is the vintage, and the conquest thine :
 " Shine we in arms ? Or sing beneath our vine ?
 " Thy pleasure points the shaft, and bends the bow,
 " The clufter blasts, or bids it brightly glow : 350
 " 'Tis thou that leadst our pow'rful armies forth,
 " And gives great Anne thy sceptre o'er the north.
 " Grant I may ever, at the morning ray,
 " Open with pray'r the consecrated day ;
 " Tune thy great praise, and bid my soul arise, 355
 " And with the mounting sun ascend the skies :
 " As that advances, let my zeal improve,
 " And glow with ardour of consummate love ;
 " Nor cease at eve, but with the setting sun
 " My endless worship shall be still begun. 360
 " And, oh ! permit the gloom of solemn night
 " To sacred thought may forcibly invite.
 " When this world's shut, and awful planets rise,
 " Call on our minds, and raise them to the skies ;
 " Compose our souls with a less dazzling sight, 365
 " And shew all nature in a milder light ;
 " How ev'ry boist'rous thought in calm subsides !
 " How the smooth spirit into goodness glides !
 " O how divine ! to tread the milky way,
 " To the bright palace of the Lord of day ; 370
 " His court admire, or for his favour sue,
 " Or leagues of friendship with his saints renew ;
 " Pleas'd to look down, and see the world asleep,
 " While I long vigils to its Founder keep !
 " Canst thou not shake the centre ? Oh ! controul, 375
 " Subdue by force the rebel in my soul.
 " Thou who canst still the raging of the flood,
 " Restrain the various tumults of my blood :
 " Teach me, with equal firmness, to sustain
 " Alluring pleasure, and assaulding pain. 380
 " O may I pant for thee in each desire !
 " And with strong faith foment the holy fire !

" Stretch

THE LAST DAY.

291

" Stretch out my soul in hope, and grasp the prize

" Which in eternity's deep bosom lies !

" At the great day of recompence behold,

385

" Devoid of fear, the fatal book unfold !

" Then wafted upward to the blissful seat,

" From age to age my grateful song repeat ;

" My light, my life, my God, my Saviour, see,

" And rival angels in the praise of Thee."

390

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE LAST DAY.

BOOK III.

THE book unfolding, the resplendent seat
Of saints and angels, the tremendous fate
Of guilty souls, the gloomy realms of woe,
And all the horrors of the world below,
I next presume to sing. What yet remains
Demands my last, but most exalted strains ;
And let the muse or now affect the sky,
Or in inglorious shades for ever lie.
She kindles ; she's inflam'd, so near the goal ;
She mounts ; she gains upon the starry pole ;
The world grows less as she pursues her flight,
And the sun darkens to her distant sight.
Heav'n op'ning, all its sacred pomp displays,
And overwhelms her with the rushing blaze ;
The triumph rings ! archangels shout around !
And echoing nature lengthens out the sound !

Ten thousand trumpets now at once advance ;
Now deepest silence lulls the vast expanse :
So deep the silence and so strong the blast,
As nature dy'd, when she had groan'd her last.
Nor man nor angel moves ; the Judge on high
Looks round, and with his glory fills the sky ;
Then on the fatal book his hand he lays,
Which high to view supporting seraphs raise ;
In solemn form the rituals are prepar'd,
The seal is broken, and a groan is heard.

And

THE LAST DAY.

293

And thou, my soul ! (oh ! fall to sudden pray'r,
And let the thought sink deep !) shalt thou be there ?

See on the left (for by the great command,
The throng divided falls on either hand) 30

How weak, how pale, how haggard, how obscene,
What more than death in ev'ry face and mien ?

With what distress, and glarings of affright,
They shock the heart, and turn away the sight ?
In gloomy orbs their trembling eye-balls roll, 35
And tell the horrid secrets of the soul.

Each gesture mourns, each look is black with care,
And ev'ry groan is loaded with despair.

Reader ! if guilty, spare the muse, and find
A truer image pictur'd in thy mind. 40

Shouldst thou behold thy brother, father, wife,
And all the soft companions of thy life,
Whose blended int'rests levell'd at one aim,
Whose mix'd desires sent up one common flame,
Divided far, thy wretched self alone 45

Cast on the left of all whom thou hast known,
How would it wound ? what millions wouldst thou give
For one more trial, one more day to live ?

Flung back in time an hour, a moment's space,
To grasp with eagerness the means of grace,
Contend for mercy with a pious rage, 50
And in that moment to redeem an age ?
Drive back the tide, suspend a storm in air,
Arrest the sun, but still of this despair.

Mark, on the right, how amiable a grace ;
Their Maker's image fresh in ev'ry face ! 55

What purple bloom my ravish'd soul admires,
And their eyes sparkling with immortal fires !
Triumphant beauty ! charms that rise above
This world, and in bless'd angels kindle love !
To the great Judge with holy pride they turn 60
And dare behold th' Almighty's anger burn ;

Its flash sustain, against its terror rise,
And on the dread tribunal fix their eyes.
Are these the forms that moulder'd in the dust ?
Oh the transcending glory of the just ! 65
Yet

Yet still some thin remains of fear and doubt
Th'infected brightness of their joy pollute.

Thus the chaste bridegroom, when the priest draws nigh
Beholds his blessing with a trembling eye,
Feels doubtful passions throb in ev'ry vein, 70
And in his cheeks are mingled joys and pain.
Lest still some intervening chance should rise,
Leap forth at once, and snatch the golden prize,
Inflame his woe, by bringing it so late,
And stab him in the crisis of his fate. 75

Since Adam's family, from first to last,
Now into one distinct survey is cast,
Look round, vain-glorious muse! and you whoe'er
Devote yourselves to fame, and think her fair,
Look round, and seek the lights of human race, 80
Whose shining acts Time's brightest annals grace!
Who founded sects, crowns conquer'd or resign'd;
Gave names to nations, or fam'd empires join'd;
Who rais'd the vale, and laid the mountain low,
And taught obedient rivers where to flow; 85
Who with vast fleets, as with a mighty chain,
Could bind the madness of the roaring main;
All lost? all undistinguish'd? no where found?
How will this truth in Bourbon's palace sound?

That hour, on which th'Almighty King on high, 90
From all eternity, has fix'd his eye,
Whether his right-hand favour'd or annoy'd,
Continu'd, alter'd, threaten'd, or destroy'd;
Southern or eastern sceptre downward hurl'd,
Gave north or west dominion o'er the world; 95
The point of time, for which the world was built,
For which the blood of God himself was spilt,
That dreadful moment is arriv'd.—

Aloft, the seats of bliss their pomp display,
Brighter than brightness this distinguish'd day: 100
Less glorious when of old th'eternal Son
From realms of night return'd with trophies won;
Thro' heav'n's high gates when he triumphant rode,
And shouting angels hail'd the victor God.

Horror.

THE LAST DAY.

295

Horrors beneath, darkness in darkness, hell
Of hell, where torments behind: orments dwell;
A furnace formidable, deep and wide,
O'erboiling with a mad sulphureous tide,
Expands its jaws, most dreadful to survey,
And roars outrageous for the destin'd prey:
The sons of light, scarce unappail'd, look down,
And nearer press heav'n's everlasting throne.

105

110

Such is the scene, and one short moment's space
Concludes the hopes and fears of human race.

115

Proceed who dares!—I tremble as I write:
The whole creation swims before my sight:
I see, I see the Judge's frowning brow;
Say not 'tis distant: I behold it now:
I faint, my tardy blood forgets to flow,
My soul recoils at the stupendous woe;
That woe, those pangs, which from the guilty breast
In these, or words like these, shall be express'd:

120

"Who burst the barriers of my peaceful grave?
"Ah! cruel death, that would no longer save,

125

"But grudg'd me e'en that narrow dark abode,
"And cast me out into the wrath of God;

"Where shrieks, the roaring flame, the rattling chain,
"And all the dreadful eloquence of pain,

"Our only song; black fire's malignant light,
"The sole refreshment of the blasted sight.

130

"Must all those pow'rs heav'n gave me to supply
"My soul with pleasure, and bring in my joy,

"Rise up in arms against me, join the foe,
"Sense, reason, memory, increase my woe?

135

"And shall my voice, ordain'd on hymns to dwell,
"Corrupt to groans, and blow the fires of hell?

"Oh! must I look with terror on my gain,
"And with existence only measure pain?

"What! no reprieve, no least indulgence giv'n,
"No beam of hope, from any point of heav'n!

140

"Ah mercy! mercy! art thou dead above?
"Is love extinguish'd in the source of love?

"Bold that I am, did heav'n stoop down to hell?
"Th'expiring Lord of life my ransom seal?

145

"Have

- " Have I not been industrious to provoke ?
 " From his embraces obstinately broke ?
 " Pursu'd and panted for his mortal hate,
 " Earn'd my destruction, labour'd out my fate ?
 " And dare I on extinguish'd love exclaim ? 150
 " Take, take full vengeance, rouse the slack'ning flame ;
 " Just is my lot—but, oh ! must it transcend
 " The reach of time, despair a distant end ?
 " With dreadful growth shoot forward and arise,
 " Where thought can't follow, and bold fancy dies ! 155
 " Never ! Where falls the soul at that dread sound ?
 " Down an abyss how dark, and how profound !
 " Down, down, (I still am falling, horrid pain !)
 " Ten thousand thousand fathoms still remain ;
 " My plunge but still begun—and this for sin ? 160
 " Could I offend if I had never been,
 " But still increas'd the senseless happy mass,
 " Flow'd in the stream, or shiver'd in the grass ?
 " Father of mercies ! why from silent earth
 " Didst thou awake and curse me into birth ? 165
 " Tear me from quiet, ravish me from night,
 " And make a thankless present of thy light !
 " Push into being a reverse of thee,
 " And animate a clod with misery ?
 " The beasts are happy ! they come forth, and keep 170
 " Short watch on earth, and then lie down to sleep :
 " Pain is for man ; and, oh ! how vast a pain
 " For crimes, which made the Godhead bleed in vain ?
 " Annull'd his groans, as far as in them lay,
 " And flung his agonies and death away ? 175
 " As our dire punishment for ever strong,
 " Our constitution too, for ever young.
 " Curst with returns of vigours, still the same,
 " Pow'rful to bear, and satisfy the flame ;
 " Still to be caught, and still to be pursu'd ! 180
 " To perish still, and still to be renew'd !
 " And this, my help ! my God ! at thy decree ?
 " Nature is chang'd, and hell should succour me.
 " And canst thou then look down from perfect bliss,
 " And see me plunging in the dark abyss ? 185
 " Calling

" Calling thee Father in a sea of fire ?
 " Or pouring blasphemies at thy desire ?
 " With mortals anguish wilt thou raise thy name,
 " And by my pangs Omnipotence proclaim ?
 " Thou, who canst tofs the planets to and fro, 190
 " Contract not thy great vengeance to my woe ;
 " Crush worlds ; in hotter flames fall'n angels lay ;
 " On me almighty wrath is cast away.
 " Call back thy thunders, Lord ! hold in thy rage,
 " Nor with a speck of wretchedness engage : 195
 " Forget me quite, nor stoop a worm to blame,
 " But lose me in the greatness of thy name.
 " Thou art a' love, all mercy, all divine,
 " And shall I make those glories cease to shine ?
 " Shall sinful man grow great by his offence, 200
 " And from its course turn back Omnipotence ?
 " Forbid it ! and oh ! grant, great God ! at least
 " This one, this slender, almost no request ;
 " When I have wept a thousand lives away ;
 " When torment is grown weary of its prey ; 205
 " When I have rav'd ten thousand years in fire,
 " Ten thousand thousand, let me then expire."
 Deep anguish ! but too late ; the hopeless soul
 Bound to the bottom of the burning pool,
 Tho' loath, and ever loud blaspheming, owns 210
 He's justly doom'd to pour eternal groans ;
 Enclos'd with horrors, and transfix'd with pain,
 Rolling in vengeance, struggling with his chain ;
 To talk to fiery tempests, to implore
 The raging flame to give its burning o'er ; 215
 To tofs, to writhe, to pant beneath his load,
 And bear the weight of an offended God.
 The favour'd of their Judge in triumph move,
 To take possession of their thrones above ;
 Satan's accurs'd desertion to supply, 220
 And fill the vacant stations of the sky ;
 Again to kindle long extinguish'd rays,
 And with new lights dilate the heav'nly blaze ;
 To crop the roses of immortal youth,
 And drink the fountain head of sacred truth ; 225
 To

To swim in seas of bliss, to strike the string,
And lift the voice to their Almighty King;
To lose eternity in grateful lays,
And fill heav'n's wide circumference with praise.

But I attempt the wondrous height in vain, 230
And leave unfinish'd the too lofty strain;
What boldly I begin let others end;
My strength exhausted, fainting I descend,
And chuse a less, but no ignoble theme,
Dissolving elements, and worlds in flame. 235

The fatal period, the great hour is come,
And nature shrinks at her approaching doom!
Loud peals of thunder give the sign, and all
Heav'n's terrors in array surround the ball;
Sharp lightnings with the meteors' blaze conspire, 240
And, darted downward, set the world on fire:
Black rising clouds the thicken'd ether choke,
And spiry flames dart thro' the rolling smoke,
With keen vibrations cut the sullen night,
And strike the darken'd sky with dreadful light; 245
From heav'n's four regions, with immortal force,
Angels drive on the wind's impetuous course,
T'enrage the flame; it spreads, it soars on high,
Swells in the storm, and billows thro' the sky:
Here winding pyramids on fire ascend, 250
Cities and deserts in one ruin blend;
Here blazing volumes, wafted, overwhelm
The spacious face of a far distant realm;
There, undermin'd, down rush eternal hills,
The neighb'ring vales the vast destruction fills. 255

Hear'st thou that dreadful crack? that sound which broke
Like peals of thunder, and the centre shook?
What wonders must that groan of nature tell?
Olympus there, and mighty Atlas, fell;
Which seem'd above the reach of fate to stand, 260
A tow'ring monument of God's right hand;
Now dust and smoke, whose brow so lately spread
O'er shelter'd countries its diffusive shade.

Shew me that celebrated spot, where all
The various rulers of the sever'd ball 265

Have

THE LAST DAY.

299

Have humbly sought wealth, honour, and redress;
That land which heav'n seem'd diligent to bless,
Once call'd Britannia: can her glories end?
And can't surrounding seas her realms defend?
Alas! in flames behold surrounding seas! 270
Like oil, their waters but augment the blaze.

Some angel say, Where ran proud Asia's bound?
Or where with fruits was fair Europa crown'd?
Where stretch'd waste Lybia? Where did India's store
Sparkle in diamonds, and her golden ore? 275
Each lost in each, their mingling kingdoms glow,
And all dissolv'd, one fiery deluge flow:
Thus earth's contending monarchies are join'd,
And a full period of ambition find.

And now whate'er or swims, or walks, or flies, 280
Inhabitants of sea, or earth, or skies;
All on whom Adam's wisdom fix'd a name,
All plunge, and perish in the conq'ring flame.

This globe alone would but defraud the fire,
Starve its devouring rage; the flakes aspire, 285
And catch the clouds, and make the heav'ns their prey;
The sun, the moon, the stars, all melt away;
All, all is lost; no monument, no sign,
Where once so proudly blaz'd the gay machine.

So bubbles on the foaming stream expire, 290
So sparks that scatter from the kindling fire;
The devastations of one dreadful hour
The great Creator's six days work devour.

A mighty, mighty ruin! yet one soul
Has more to boast, and far outweighs the whole; 295
Exalted in superior excellence,

Cast down to nothing, such a vast expence.
Have you not seen th'eternal mountains nod,
An earth dissolving, a descending God?
What strange surprises through all nature ran? 300

For whom these revolutions, but for man?
For him, Omnipotence new measures takes;
For him, thro' all eternity, awakes;
Pours on him gifts sufficient to supply
Heav'n's loss, and with fresh glories fill the sky. 305

Think

Think deeply then, O man, how great thou art :
 Pay thyself homage with a trembling heart ;
 What angels guard, no longer dare neglect,
 Slighting thyself, affront not God's respect.
 Enter the sacred temple of thy breast, 310
 And gaze, and wander there, a ravish'd guest ;
 Gaze on these hidden treasures thou shalt find,
 Wander thro' all the glories of thy mind.
 Of perfect knowledge, see, the dawning light
 Foretels a noon most exquisitely bright ! 315
 Here, springs of endless joy are breaking forth !
 'T here, buds the promise of celestial worth !
 Worth, which must ripen in a happier clime,
 And brighter sun, beyond the bounds of time.
 Thou, Minor, canst not guess thy vast estate, 320
 What stores, on foreign coasts, thy landing wait :
 Lose not thy claim, let virtue's path be trod ;
 Thus glad all heav'n, and please that bounteous God,
 Who, to light thee to pleasures, hung on high
 Yon radiant orb, proud regent of the sky : 325
 That service done, its beams shall fade away,
 And God shine forth in one eternal day.

END OF THE LAST DAY.



